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SURVIVAL GUIDE

Vol. 5 Issue 4

DISASTER'S EDGE

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ON YOUR TERMS

MOVING THE WOUNDED

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How to Safely Stabilize
and Carry a Victim

OWN
THE DARK
Modern Night Vision Devices

CRISIS
COMMS
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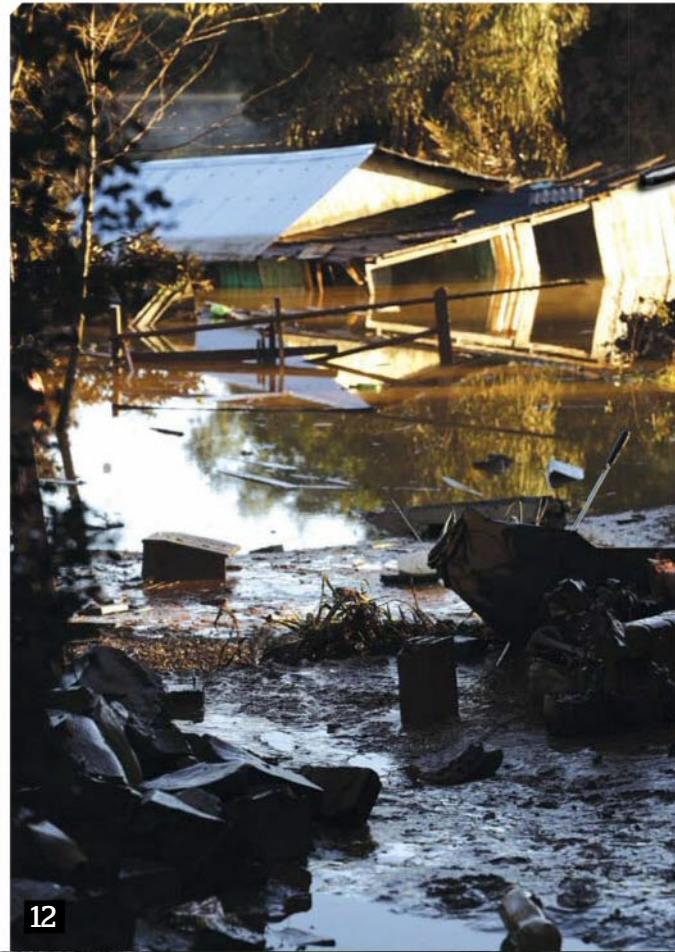
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FIRST WORDS

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR EVACUATION

As we turn the corner from winter and spring and start enjoying the warmer months as we go into summer, we should be aware of a few things. The summer months comprise the season for natural events such as tornadoes, hurricanes and wildfires. The summer months are also when the most people are outside, on the roads, at sporting events and on vacation.

It's for these reasons we should take caution by having a plan in place in case a crisis arises. In this *American Survival Guide*, we talk a bit about being prepared for a forced evacuation, and never is there a greater time to be well prepared than when you're away from home. At home, we have supplies, our important paperwork and plenty of storage space to stow our evacuation kits. After all, during the late fall and winter months, that's where we spend most of our time.

When we're out watching summer parades or on vacation, it's easy to forget our preparations and leave these items at home. However, you can't really predict when a chemical spill might occur or a nuclear facility goes on lockdown and people in the vicinity have to get out fast. The stuff we take on vacation for the fun times won't necessarily be the same clothing and gear we'll need if we're forced into an evacuation.

I remember when my family took the "Hillbilly Highway" down to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, when I was around 20 years old. Hurricane Bob made its appearance, and not only were we unprepared for an evacuation, we had a hard time just figuring out where we were supposed to go.

Your evacuation bag will not do you any good when you leave it at home. You might think, *Well, I'll have clothes with me wherever I go, and I should be OK.*

You need to be ready to leave at a moment's notice—not fumbling around where you are staying and trying to pack up what you brought

with you. In addition, some of the items you'll need in your evac bag (as you'll read in "Evacuation Preparation" on page 12) aren't the typical things you carry with you all the time. Even when you're away from home, every member of your family needs to have an evac bag already packed and ready to go.

Some of you might be able to modify a bugout bag to some degree, but a lot of bugout items will be different than evac items. For evacuation to a local shelter, clothing, snacks, hygiene items, personal documents, water and medicines are going to be a priority. Other items, such as games, cards or even audiobooks, will make the waiting much more bearable.

But most of the typical gear in a bugout bag won't do you much good, although it's very comfortable to have those items on hand, as well. In fact, a truly clever person might find a way to quickly attach an evac module to their existing bugout bag so that some items are redundantly packed in the different types of kits they keep ready.

If you are away from home, research the area you will be visiting. Assess possible regional or seasonal threats—and have a plan. Study local maps to find travel routes, and consult local agencies that will have specific information that will make a possible evacuation go much more smoothly. Those are responsible things to do to provide safety for yourself, but more importantly, for your family.

All of life is a test. Study ahead of time, and be ready for what might come. Second chances are few and far between.



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PRODUCTS

NEW

1

Crimson Trace LiNQ 100

Crimson Trace has introduced a cutting-edge laser system for rifles that offers the same instinctive activation as most of this company's lasers designed for pistols. The new LiNQ 100 system allows the pistol grip to be replaced on a rifle and a laser module to be attached forward on the rifle. The revolutionary change is the absence of any wiring between the two. A wireless connection between the pistol grip and laser module is all that's required. There are no wires to tangle or pressure pads to locate. As with Crimson Trace's pistol laser designs, simply grasping the grip will activate the laser via the wireless connection. This is a first for the industry and is surely a sign of things to come.

MSRP

\$549

URL

www.crimsontrace.com

2

Coast FL-85 Headlamp

In the never-ending race to produce better and brighter headlamps for active outdoors users, Coast has just announced its new FL-85 headlamp. Because of its three different brightness levels, it can be used to spotlight a subject out to 565 feet or provide a gentle flood for camp activities. Use this headlamp in emergency situations (such as evacuations), when hands-free lighting is required, or on the trail. To keep a low profile and preserve night vision, red LED lighting is available on the FL-85 via its own switch so you don't have to cycle through the white lights. The FL-85 is a lightweight, versatile package that can be used in a multitude of situations. This headlamp needs just three triple-A batteries.

MSRP

\$71.99

URL

www.coastportland.com

3

MeoStar R2 8x56 RD Riflescope

Never standing still with its products, Meopta has just added a new model scope to the R2 line—the 8x56 RD Riflescope. The 56mm objective and Meolux optic coating allow for 99.8 percent light transmission, offering incredible clarity to the sight picture. The 8x56 RD fixed-power scope has a 7mm exit pupil, and its RD8 illuminated-reticle system has eight levels of brightness intensity to adjust to varying light conditions. The MeoStar R2 8x56 is water-, shock- and fogproof, providing excellent protection to its internal elements. It also has MeoShield coating on the lenses to protect against scratches in the field.

MSRP

\$1,499

URL

www.meopta.com

5

Tri-Star KRX Tactical Shotgun

When some new products are announced, you can see beyond what's in front of you and immediately recognize its full potential. The KRX Tactical is just such a product.

It is a 12-gauge, box-fed, semiauto shotgun with standard AR controls and a 20-inch barrel. It is a lightweight piece to handle and comes with two five-round magazines, a carrying handle and a front sight. The potential here, of course, is to see if other ammunition options are offered in the future, such as extended magazines or even a reliable drum-fed system. Only time will tell, but you'll have to admit that it's a great opportunity.

MSRP

\$595

URL

www.tristararms.com

4

SIG Sauer Elite Performance Hunting Ammo

Offering even more options for the handgun hunting crowd, SIG Sauer has just introduced its line of Elite Performance Hunting Ammunition for both the .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum calibers. The .357 Magnum round is offered in a 125-grain load with a V-Crown jacked hollow point, while the .44 Magnum load sports a 240-grain V-Crown bullet. Velocities for the .357 and .44 are 1,450 and 1,300 feet per second, respectively. Both rounds include a stacked hollow-point cavity and Ducta-Brite 7A-coated brass for easier loading and extraction. SIG Sauer also offers an FMJ version of the .357 Magnum loading that offers the same ballistics at a cheaper price for practice at the range.

MSRPs

.357 Mag V-Crown (box of 20): \$23.95
.357 Mag SIG FMJ (box of 50): \$27
.44 Rem Mag V-Crown (box of 20): \$30

URL

www.sigsauer.com

6



6

Steel Will Gekko 1505

One of the small comforts in life is always having a knife on your person for whatever might arise. Steel Will has introduced the Gekko 1505, a new folder model that features sleek lines, a classy appearance and offers real functionality, despite its attractive styling.

It's just as much at home in the woods as it is in your favorite suit pocket. The blade is D2 steel and has a PVD coating to resist wear and corrosion.

With its drop-point blade profile, the Gekko 1505 could step in as relief for your regular hunting knife or be left to handle light chores around camp. Its keen edge, reversible clip and easy handling might just make this your favorite folder.

MRSP

\$239.99

URL

www.steelwillknives.com



1

2

3

5

PRODUCTS

NEW

7

CRKT Clever Girl

As part of your self-defense preparations, a knife designed specifically for that role should always be a key part of your daily kit. Columbia River Knife & Tool has introduced the Clever Girl knife that is designed just for self-defense and also conveys the message of what this knife is all about as soon as you see it.

The Clever Girl is a high-speed, low-drag knife to bring the owner safely home. Its slender design includes a glass-reinforced handle and an upswept, wicked blade profile, along with a low-profile sheath for easy retrieval. The Clever Girl has your back.

MSRP

\$125

URL

www.crkt.com

9

Streamlight ProTac HL 4

Things just got a little brighter over at Streamlight with the introduction of its new ProTac HL 4 LED tactical flashlight. Using either CR123 or 18650 batteries, the ProTac HL 4 pumps out a blinding 2,200 lumens of white light—reaching out to 346 meters in the "high" setting. Used to illuminate an entire area for absolute visibility, it also offers medium and low settings, along with an SOS setting and a disorienting strobe effect.

Streamlight offers its rechargeable 18650 batteries to be used in this tactical flashlight instead of regular CR123 batteries. The 18650 batteries can be recharged via AC/DC or USB power.

MSRP

\$175

URL

www.streamlight.com

11

MTM Ammo Crate Utility Box

One of the things we always seem to need for our gear is storage space—particularly boxes. For 2016, MTM has introduced a line of Ammo Crate Utility Boxes, which include both a shallow and a deep version.

The ACR7-18 (pictured here) is perfect for bulk storage of ammunition such as shotgun or rifle shells. The two side handles will allow the user to carry up to 65 pounds in the box. Even better: The Ammo Crate has four attachment points for mounting on an ATV and carrying your hunting or survival gear while you tool around on the trails.

An integrated O-ring seal inside the lid will ensure all your gear stays dry while you're out in the weather.

MSRP

Varies with size

URL

www.mtmcase-gard.com

8

Springfield Armory Range Officer Operator

For the serious-minded individual looking to get the most efficiency and performance out of their defensive pistol, Springfield Armory has just added the Range Officer Operator to its line of 1911s.

Like the original Range Officer, the Operator offers a national match forged frame and slide. A national match stainless barrel is precisely fitted with a bushing for optimum accuracy.

The Range Officer Operator comes with a fiber-optic front sight and low-profile rear combat sights. Two seven-round magazines are included in the package. Rounding out the ensemble is a national match trigger, Delta hammer and a Picatinny rail for accessory attachment.

MSRP

\$1,029

URL

www.springfield-armory.com

10

FLIR Scout TK

Technology usually isn't cheap, and some of us can't afford the high-end products available on the market. However, FLIR has made its proven technology available to a larger market with the introduction of its new Scout TK thermal vision monocular. Available at the lowest price of the company's thermal imaging product range, the Scout TK allows you to capture thermal images of people and animals up to 100 yards away. It also includes the ability to take still images and video. This pocket-sized device could be an essential part of your kit when on the trail or to detect if something or someone is on your trail instead.

MSRP

\$249

URL

www.flir.com

12



8



11

12

Mossberg 7-Shot 590 and 590A1 Tactical Shotguns

You never know when you might need an extra round. Mossberg's got you covered with its new 7-shot 590 and 590-A1 shotguns.

Previously limited to a 6-shot capacity, these redesigned tactical shotguns offer an extra round of ammunition with the same 18.5-inch barrel. The 590A1 models have a tri-rail forend for the attachment of accessories to the full-length bottom rail and the two mini-rails on the sides.

The 590A1 (pictured here) incorporates a ghost ring sight and a cylinder bore barrel, along with Kryptek's Typhon camouflage. The only pump shotgun to pass U.S. Armed Services mil-spec requirements, the 590A1 model also includes a heavy-wall barrel, a metal trigger guard and a metal safety button.

If it comes down to it, you will be in good hands and have plenty of firepower with Mossberg's new shotgun additions.

MSRP

\$683

URL

www.mossberg.com



10



9



7

EVACUATION **PREPARATION**

A blurry, close-up photograph of a woman's face and shoulder. She is wearing a dark-colored hoodie and has long brown hair. Her gaze is directed towards the right side of the frame, where a portion of a car's interior and a window are visible. The background is out of focus, suggesting a sense of motion or a hasty evacuation.

BUGGING OUT ON SOMEONE ELSE'S TERMS

BY JIM COBB

It happens with nary a moment's notice. A train carrying toxic chemicals derails. Floodwaters suddenly begin to rise. Wildfires take a turn and increase in intensity. This isn't a head-for-the-hills-and-hunker-down-in-a-bunker situation, but you do need to beat feet and head for a safer location. Odds are pretty good that the authorities in the area will be nipping at your heels to keep you moving, too.



An emergency evacuation differs from a bugout in a couple of subtle, but important, ways. An evacuation is usually a sudden and immediate event. Not always, of course, such as in the case of a hurricane warning. More often than not, it is something that happens at the drop of a hat. Bugging out, though, is hopefully a more deliberate action taken in response to a deteriorating situation in your area.

Next is the length of time involved. An evacuation is typically a temporary situation. You're leaving and probably doing so in a hurry, but you'll be back relatively soon. Think of it as a very impromptu "vacation" of sorts. A bugout, on the other hand, is likely to involve a lengthy, if not permanent, stay away from home: You're heading for the hills, and you're not looking back.

The third difference between bugging out and evacuating concerns who makes the final decision to leave. Chances are that if the crisis has devolved to the point at which you're bugging out, you've made the determination on your own to leave. Evacuations, however, are often initiated by government agencies and will usually involve law enforcement handling at least some of the duties. In other words, bugging out is voluntary, while evacuation



◀ Getting stuck in traffic snarls is something to avoid when evacuating.

"YOUR BUGOUT BAGS CAN SERVE AS EVACUATION KITS WITH A LITTLE TWEAKING. AFTER ALL, IT IS BETTER TO BE OVERPREPARED THAN TO BE LACKING IN ESSENTIALS."

might involve someone else making that decision for you.

It is always better if you are making the decision to leave rather than having that decision made for you. Always strive to keep close tabs on developing situations in your area, and take action as you see fit. If you wait for the authorities to announce an evacuation, you risk getting caught up in the inevitable traffic snarls and such.

That said, it is possible to take some precautions and do some planning for an unplanned evacuation.

ROUTE PLANNING

If you live in a hurricane-prone area, you have, no doubt, seen evacuation route signs. These pre-planned routes will take residents away from the coast and toward a major city—one far enough inland to be safe from the hurricane and related damage. Nevertheless, as we've seen time and again, those routes quickly become not much more than slowly moving parking lots ahead of the storm.

There are two choices: Get out of town ahead of the crowd or find routes that are likely to be far less traveled. While the ideal would be the former, of course, plan ahead for the latter, just in case.

Fortunately, disaster response agencies have done much of the work for you. Planned evacuation routes are a matter of public record, as are the overall disaster response plans currently in place. Most counties and many municipalities have an established emergency management department or committee. Often, although not always, this is a function of the sheriff's office or police department.

Once you've located the contact information for the emergency management director, contact him or her about obtaining copies of the disaster plans for your area—specifically, plans related to evacuation routes.

Examining these established evacuation routes will tell you where the majority of people will be headed in a major crisis. Wherever possible, plan your own routes to stay away from those areas. This will hopefully allow you to avoid most of the crowds and get out of the area quickly. Get to know your area very well, and you'll be able to take advantage of little-used side streets, farm lanes, back alleys and more.

Bear in mind, too, that although the route you plot might be far longer in total mileage



than a more direct one, you'll likely be able to move much faster, because you won't be fighting against traffic snarls, etc.

Those disaster plans might also include information about roadblocks that will be set up and used to funnel traffic into the evacuation routes. Knowing their locations beforehand will help you plan your own routes around them. A word of caution, though: Do not put yourself in a position in which you catch the attention of law enforcement. Should that happen, you might find your journey coming to an abrupt end.

EVACUATION DESTINATIONS

Just as with bugging out, evacuation planning should involve choosing a few different destinations ahead of time. However, they need not be campsites out in the middle of nowhere and far from any population centers.

Don't get me wrong; if that's your plan, have at it. What I'm saying is that because an evacuation isn't likely to be due to a societal collapse, but rather because of a temporary condition, you might be better off heading for the home of a family member or perhaps just a motel.

Again, though, you need to do your homework. Talk to family members or friends about your plans, and be sure they are willing and able to accommodate your family and you for a few days. (Be sure to reciprocate, of course, should they need

"I RECOMMEND CHOOSING AT LEAST THREE POTENTIAL EVACUATION DESTINATIONS, PREFERABLY IN DIFFERENT COMPASS DIRECTIONS FROM YOUR HOME."



◀ A cheap (but clean) motel room might be all you need for a place to crash for a night or two until you can return home.

◀ Street maps might be necessary if your phone's GPS isn't an option.



MEDS

In this day and age, it seems as if almost everyone is taking one or more prescription medications. Many of these meds are either life-sustaining or can have severe side effects if they are suddenly ceased. Therefore, if you or family members regularly take one or more medications, you'll need to have a supply with you when you evacuate.

One of the easiest ways to accomplish this takes a little time but has zero added expense. Most prescriptions allow you to get a refill when you still have a few days left on the current supply. Get your refill as soon as you're able to do so and then set aside the overlap supply for your evacuation kit. Do this a few times, always rotating out the old medications and replacing them with a new supply, and it won't take long before you have a stash that will last a week or more.

Understand that it is vitally important not to skip doses for the sake of saving meds for your kits.



a place to go.) You might even go so far as to store a small amount of supplies at their home (for instance, a few sets of clothing and some toiletries in a duffel bag or small plastic tote). If you trust them implicitly, you might also include a bit of cash.

If an inexpensive motel fits into your plans, be sure to contact it now to make sure it will accept pets, should that be an issue for your family. Many smaller motels will allow small dogs and cats, but some will draw the line at larger breeds. It pays to find this out ahead of time, rather than showing up in the middle of the night with your Rottweiler, only to discover you need to find a new place to go.

► A train carrying toxic chemicals and going off the rails can result in an immediate emergency evacuation of the area.



I recommend choosing at least three potential evacuation destinations, preferably in different compass directions from your home. This gives you options, depending on the nature of the calamity forcing you to hit the road. Given that evacuation situations are almost always reasonably local, you probably don't need to plan a cross-country journey, either. Traveling an hour or two from home is usually sufficient.

If at all possible, avoid being forced into any sort of government-run emergency shelter. While this might turn out to be your only option in some situations, in most



Evacuation Kit



Evacuation is less like bugging out and more like a short vacation. That said, your bugout bag can certainly double as your evacuation kit with a little tweaking.

cases, you'll be far better off if you're able to stay with family or friends outside the affected area. Remember, though, that even a community emergency shelter will be a better option than trying to tread water for days on end in a flood.

EVACUATION KITS VS BUGOUT BAGS

Because an evacuation is usually a more temporary situation than a bugout, the gear and supplies that should be included in your evacuation kit will differ a bit from the traditional bugout bag. Gone, for instance, are the majority of shelter supplies, such as tents, sleeping bags, mats and the like. This isn't an extended camping trip; it's more like a weekend jaunt to Grandma's house for the holidays.

When assembling your evacuation kit, think along the lines of a short vacation rather than living off the land. Pack enough supplies, clothing and toiletries to last your family a few days. Don't forget a supply of any prescription medications you or a family member has to take.

Your evacuation kit should also have copies of all your important papers, just in case your home is damaged in the disaster. Flash drives are an excellent option for this. It can take some time and effort to scan everything and save it to the USB drive, but it is definitely worth it and is better than lugging around a stack of paper. These documents should include:

Identification: Scanned copies of driver's licenses, school ID cards for the children and a copy of each social security card

Insurance policies: Home, auto, life

Bank statements: One scanned copy for each bank account, updated annually

Credit card statements: One scanned copy for each account, updated annually

Health records: Immunization records for each family member, along with information regarding allergies, prescriptions and any other known health issues, updated annually or as needed

Property ownership records: Deed for real estate, registration for vehicles.

Something else to add to the flash drive is a video inventory of your home and personal property. Flash drives today contain a lot of memory and will easily handle large video files. Take your digital camera and video each room. For high-end electronics and other expensive items, be sure to zoom in and capture model and serial numbers. Open drawers, cabinets and

YOUR PET'S EVACUATION KIT



You should take the time to assemble a small kit for each pet that will be evacuating with you. These supplies need not be kept separate from the main evacuation kit, of course. The pet evacuation kit should contain, at a minimum:

- ◀ **Leash and muzzle:** Even the best-behaved pet might act out when stressed. And, if you end up at a community shelter, the staff probably won't allow the animal inside unless leashed and muzzled, if not crated.
- ◀ **Health record:** Obtain from your veterinarian a complete copy of the pet's immunizations and other health information.
- ◀ **Food:** Many pets suffer digestive upsets if their food is suddenly changed. Have a small supply of their normal food, along with a few of their favorite treats.
- ◀ **Foldable water dish:** Critters usually have a rather hard time drinking water from a bottle. Head to your favorite pet supply store for a foldable water dish to keep in the kit. Toss in a water bottle or two, as well.



◀ **Photos of you and your pet:** If you and your pet become separated, a good photo of you with your pet will go a long way toward identifying it and proving ownership. Our pets rely on us to provide for their safety and well-being. Don't let them down.

closets. In the event you lose your home in the disaster, this video record will be a lifesaver when it comes to figuring out what was lost.

In addition, consider going through your family photo albums—both physical photos, as well as digital ones—and adding favorites to the thumb drive.

A bugout bag would normally contain supplies for procuring food in the wild, such as fishing tackle, snares and other devices. When evacuating, however, the focus is on getting from point A to point B as quickly as possible. You won't be spending time running a trap line.

▶ Wildfires can suddenly change direction, endangering entire neighborhoods.



◀ Roadblocks are often planned ahead of time. Consult your local disaster response plans to find out where they'll be located.

Therefore, just be sure to include in your kit some nonperishable snacks and a few bottles of water.

I recommend adding some type of water filtration system. Depending on the nature of the disaster, clean water might be difficult to find until you've gotten well outside the affected area. You don't want to add a case of the "trots" on top of an already stressful situation.

Keep in mind that the world outside the affected area will be relatively normal. Cash and at least one low-balance credit card will be your best friends. Even if you escape home with little more than the clothes on your back, you'll be able to pay for fuel, food and other necessities.

Emergency evacuations happen without notice, but that doesn't mean you can't plan ahead for them. Your bugout bags can serve as evacuation kits with a little tweaking.

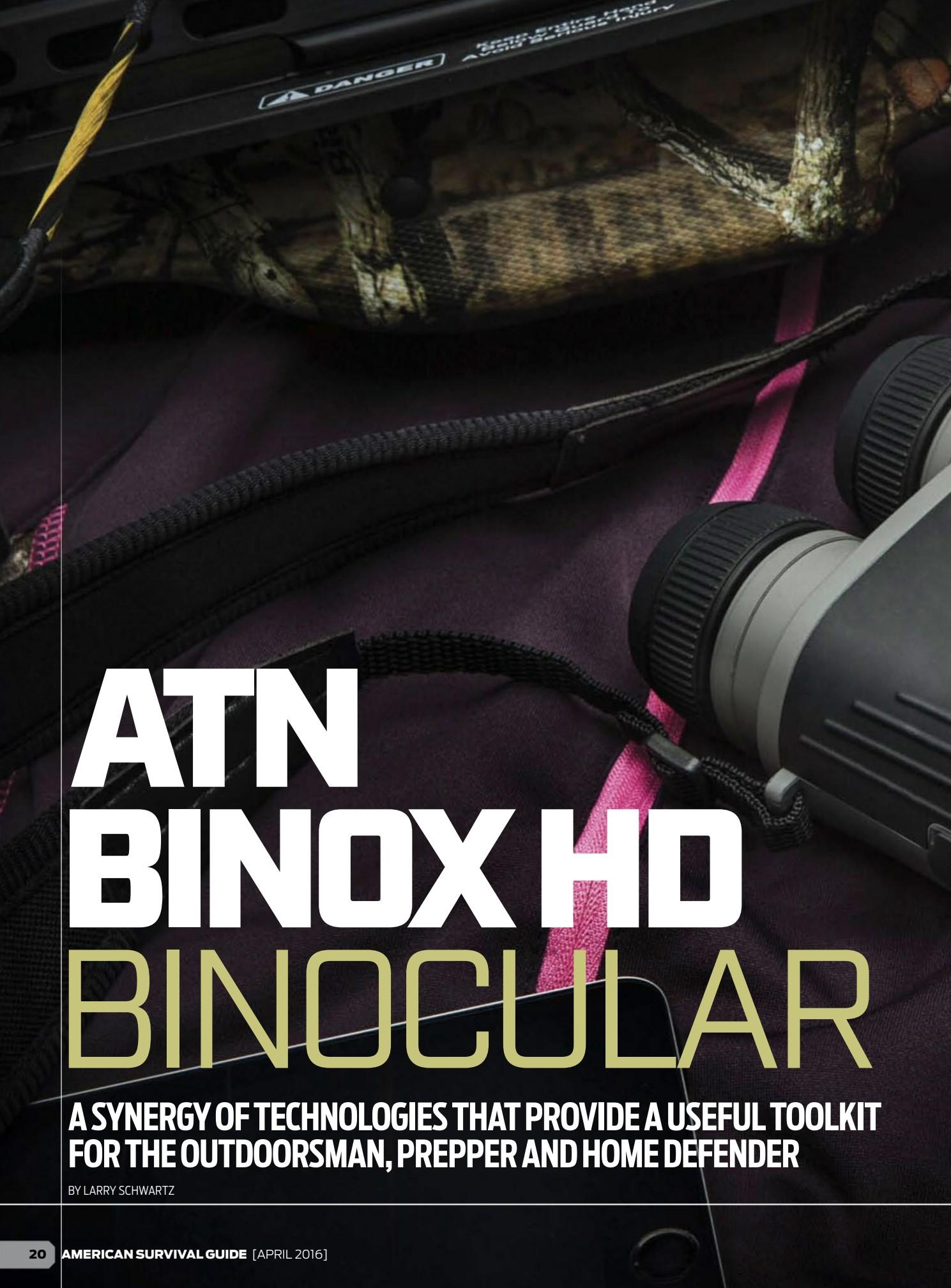
After all, it is better to be overprepared than to be lacking in essentials. If you take the time to plan your routes and set up your evacuation destinations, you'll be far better off than those around you. **ASG**

"AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION DIFFERS FROM A BUGOUT IN A COUPLE OF SUBTLE, BUT IMPORTANT, WAYS. AN EVACUATION IS USUALLY A SUDDEN AND IMMEDIATE EVENT."



Always strive to keep close tabs on developing situations in your area, and take action as you see fit. If you wait for the authorities to announce an evacuation, you risk getting caught up in the inevitable traffic snarls and such.





ATN BINOX HD BINOCULAR

A SYNERGY OF TECHNOLOGIES THAT PROVIDE A USEFUL TOOLKIT
FOR THE OUTDOORSMAN, PREPPER AND HOME DEFENDER

BY LARRY SCHWARTZ



American Technologies Network Corporation (ATN) has been making scopes and binoculars with video and night vision features for over two decades. One of its latest innovations, the ATN BinoX HD binocular, is an effective blend of technologies that combines the capabilities of a pair of zoom binoculars with a GPS, a 1080p video camera and the night observation devices used by Navy SEALs and Army Special Forces. While all these features would usually cost well into four figures, ATN did it at the very reasonable three-figure retail price of \$479.

INITIAL UNBOXING

When you open the box, you will see that you don't have a typical binocular. Inside, you will find the binocular and a set of three CR123 batteries. At the bottom of the box is a protective carrying case, a strap for the case and lens covers for the binocular.

The binocular, itself, is composed of two barrels with a control pad between them

◀ The control panel located on the center top of the BinoX HD lets you control the zoom feature to navigate and select the options you want in the device menus. The up and down arrows control the image zoom. All four buttons are used with the menus. The left and right arrows initiate picture and video mode to take snapshots and to start or stop a video.

for operating the various functions. The right-hand barrel houses a 1080p high-definition video camera that projects an image onto a display panel located in each eyepiece. The left-hand barrel contains the infrared (IR) illuminator used in night vision mode.

The eyepieces on each barrel move left and right so you can center them on your eyes. Each eyepiece is also adjustable for focus so you can clearly see the display on each barrel. To focus the camera, you rotate the front end of the right barrel. Rotate the front end of the left barrel to adjust the width of the IR illuminator beam.

At the heart of the BinoX HD is ATN's Obsidian Core processor, a custom-designed microprocessor that runs the binocular's sensors and mechanics. Operating at more than a billion cycles per second, it processes the command and video data to run the BinoX HD's menus and produce its images. You select the commands you want in the menu via the control pad located between the two barrels of the binocular.

MYRIAD FEATURES

The many features found in the BinoX HD fall into four main categories: observation, image capture, navigation and peripheral devices.

Observation: The high-resolution video camera, combined with the infrared illuminator, gives you the ability to see in daylight and at night. In night vision mode, because it uses an IR light source instead of light amplification, you can see in total darkness when there is an absolute minimum of ambient light. You can also zoom in and out between 4X and 14X by using the control pad on the top of the binocular.

Image Capture: The digital video camera has two daylight recording modes: standard full HD video mode of 1080p at 30 frames per second and the lower mode of 720p at 60 frames per second. It also features image stabilization to help ensure clear images and video. An integral microphone lets you record what you hear and also provide commentary. In night mode, there are two additional options: 1080p low-light amplification and 1080p high-light amplification. To take a picture, you press the left key on the control pad found on the top of the BinoX HD. To start taking video, press the right key.

Navigation: With all the capabilities of a GPS receiver built into it, the BinoX HD lets

"AT THE HEART OF THE BINOX HD IS ATN'S OBSIDIAN CORE PROCESSOR, A CUSTOM-DESIGNED MICROPROCESSOR THAT RUNS THE BINOCULAR'S SENSORS AND MECHANICS."

ATN BinoX 4-16 Smart Binocular

► GENERATION: SMARTHD OPTICS

► MAGNIFICATION: 4-16X

► SENSOR RESOLUTION: 1080P

► DISPLAYS: 1 MEGAPIXEL

► OPERATION: DAY/NIGHT

► PROCESSOR: OBSIDIAN CORE 1GHZ

► DIOPTER ADJUSTMENT: + OR - 5

► SD CARD: 4 TO 32 GB

► VIDEO OUT: 1080P/30 FPS OR 720P/60FPS

► REMOTE VIEWFINDER: ANDROID OR IOS APP

► POWER: (3) CR123 BATTERIES

◀ The BinoX HD is powered by three CR123 camera batteries that are commonly found. Remember to turn the binocular and Wi-Fi off when not in use to minimize power usage.



► The features that involve video and images require you to add a micro-SD card to provide the necessary storage for your images and audio files.

► A brass insert next to the battery compartment accepts standard connectors for a tripod. As a result, you can use it as a spotting scope or video camera.



► The Obsidian Core is a highly specialized computer that is designed to run a suite of sensors and crunch huge image/video files in the blink of an eye. Powered by a powerful processor and utilizing a 1080p high-resolution sensor with distinct night vision capability, the Obsidian Core outputs crisp color images.

you see where you are on the ground; records where you have been for later display on an interactive map; how fast you are moving; and your altitude. Its geo-tagging capability lets you mark the pictures you take with location information for later reference. It even has a built-in electronic compass that displays at the top of the viewfinder.

Peripheral Devices: The BinoX HD also has a wireless connection built into it. This allows you to connect to it with your iPhone or Android smartphone. It also has ports for micro-HDMI and micro-USB cables you can use to display stored video or pictures on your computer or television. You can display the live feed from the BinoX HD, as well.

KEEPING UP WITH THE LATEST INNOVATIONS

One of my favorite features of the BinoX HD is its ability to update the firmware

that provides its powerful features. The value of this feature, and the importance ATN places on it, is shown in its online owner's manual, which states that updating to the latest version is the first thing you should do when you get your BinoX HD.

To update the firmware, you go to the firmware update page on the website (www.ATNCorp.com), download the latest version of the firmware, transfer it to the microSD card in the BinoX HD and then restart the BinoX HD to upload the new firmware.

vision capability fills in the missing piece in my home security puzzle. And the price point isn't bad either.

If you like things plain and simple, a better choice for you might be to hang a regular glass lens binocular around your neck and remember to keep your smartphone in your



SO MANY WAYS TO USE IT

The innovative blend of technologies in the BinoX HD makes it a versatile piece of gear—so versatile, in fact, that the ways you can use it are really limited only by your imagination. You can use it as a conventional 4-16X zoom binocular and scout for game during daylight or low-light conditions. You can mount it on a tripod and use it as a spotting scope and film sporting events or the elk on the other side of a basin. The BinoX HD's night vision capability allows you to do all these things at night, too.

And, speaking of night, you can watch for people intruding on your property or catch the little critter that is tearing into your trashcan. It will also show you what or who made the bump in the night that woke you up.

You can use the GPS and navigation features to track your time afield and capture waypoints of things you don't want to forget about. The altimeter and compass will allow you to solve one of the most challenging things in land navigation—knowing precisely where you are on the side of a long ridgeline. The electronic compass will give you bearings so you can transfer directions you gather in the field onto a map for later use.

Its geo-tagging capability makes the BinoX HD great for geo-caching games. It is also good for capturing where game animals are bedding down or the old cabin you found deep in the backwoods of your bugout property.

◀ You can look at the BinoX HD video feed on a larger screen, as on your iPad or computer, to better see the image details.

pocket. However, if you appreciate the value of a single device that takes pictures and video, serves as a digital binocular—both day and night—and helps you know where you are in the backcountry, the BinoX HD binocular from ATN Corporation will be a good addition to your standard loadout. **ASG**

ONLINE USER'S MANUAL

Like all of its products, ATN provides an online manual for the BinoX HD that shows you how to use the mechanical parts of the device, as well as its function menu. You can access the manual through the ATN website or go directly to <http://manual.ATNCorp.com/binox>.

SOURCE

• (800) 910-2862
WWW.ATNCORP.COM

ADD THIS ONE TO YOUR GIFT LIST

My overall impression of the BinoX HD? I like it—a lot. Its blend of features provides me with resources I can, and do, use at work, home and at play. More importantly, its night



LEGENDARY DESIGN

RUGGED RELIABILITY

LIFETIME WARRANTY

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MOVING THE WOUNDED

A photograph showing the back of a medical professional wearing a bright yellow high-visibility vest with reflective stripes. The professional is kneeling on a grassy, hilly terrain, stabilizing a patient lying on a stretcher. Another person's arm and vest are visible to the right. In the background, there are rolling green hills and distant mountains under a cloudy sky.

METHODS FOR PATIENT TRANSPORT IN SURVIVAL SETTINGS

BY JOE ALTON, M.D.

uring normal times, your main goal upon encountering an injured or ill person is to get them to a modern medical facility as soon as possible. These medical assets and facilities will, unfortunately, be nonexistent in many survival scenarios.

Standard first-aid protocol dictates that you should leave a victim in the position in which they are found until emergency personnel arrive. When help is not on the way, however, this might eventually become impractical or impossible.

As a result, you will have to make a decision about whether your patient can or cannot be treated for their medical problem at their present location. If they cannot, you must consider how to move your patient to where the bulk of your medical supplies is.

Before deciding whether to transport, stabilize the patient as much as possible. This means assuring open airways, stopping all bleeding, splinting orthopedic injuries and more. If you are unable to do this, consider having a group member get the supplies needed to make transport safer. Have as many helpers available to assist you before you move the patient. If you know the amount of assistance you'll have, you can choose a method of evacuation that will cause the least trauma to both patient and medic.

A person with a possible spinal injury should be "logrolled" onto a stretcher as a unit without bending their neck or back if possible. A cervical collar and supportive blocks with straps can be used to secure the spine of all patients suspicious for injury. An unstable neck, especially in an unconscious victim, could easily be traumatized, even if not involved in the original accident. Keep the head in alignment with the spine during transport.

If you have several helpers, transporting the patient is easier but requires coordination. You, as medic, will serve as leader of the transport team. This entails making sure the patient is transferred to the stretcher safely and also that all team members lift and evacuate at the same time. A simple "Prepare to lift," "Lift" and "March" command should suffice to ensure that everyone is on the same page.



“STANDARD FIRST-AID PROTOCOL DICTATES THAT YOU SHOULD LEAVE A VICTIM IN THE POSITION IN WHICH THEY ARE FOUND UNTIL EMERGENCY PERSONNEL ARRIVE.”

To move a patient onto a stretcher, the medic positions the casualty next to it on his back with his arms at his side. Then, one helper slips his arms under the casualty's back and waist, and another helper does the same under the hip and knees. Upon your command, they lift and place the victim on the stretcher.

An alternative would be to have two helpers carefully turn the patient on their side, rather than lift. You would then slip the stretcher underneath. For this, the casualty's arms can be placed across their chest. The head is kept in alignment with the spine throughout.

There are many methods available to move the injured patient. You would, of course, prefer to have a vehicle of some sort, but this will be a challenge in a survival environment.

The next easiest method involves using a stretcher. Many excellent litter systems are available commercially, but stretchers can be improvised with a little ingenuity. Even without any materials to put together a litter, there are still methods that will allow one or two medics to achieve their transport goal.

TRANSPORT USING FOUND MATERIALS

In a survival setting, an injury will likely occur without a commercially made stretcher readily available. However, abandoned residential buildings in urban or rural settings will contain a number of found materials that can serve the purpose.

An inside door, blankets or even an ironing board will be easy finds; after all, who takes their ironing board when they bug out? All these can function as a litter



➤ Cervical and lumbar vertebrae are most commonly injured.



or backboard—as long as enough helpers are present to hold the victim in place. Folded-over paracord, blankets or rope can be used to serve as handholds and to prevent the patient's arms or legs from dangling off the litter or backboard.

Another example of an easily found item in an abandoned building is a chair. If you have a conscious casualty, a sturdy chair can be used by itself as a reasonable litter. In this method, the patient sits or is placed on the chair. One transporter stands in back of the chair, grasping it from the sides and tilting it back. The second transporter grasps the chair legs in front, and both lift the chair. For short distances, the second transporter can face the victim, but it would be easier for longer distances to face forward.

TRANSPORT USING BLANKETS OR CLOTHING

Four-person blanket stretcher: Even if you have no backboard, a blanket and/or sturdy poncho can help move a casualty. Simply place the victim on the stretched-out blanket and then roll the sides inward to form handholds to lift and carry.

Two-person blanket stretcher: With fewer assistants, you'll need additional support. If you have two long poles or sticks about 6 or 7 feet long and 2 or more inches thick, you can easily make a litter. Lay the blanket flat on the ground and then place the two sticks on top so that the blanket is divided into thirds. Fold both of the outer thirds over the sticks, back



◀ Four-man standard stretcher transport

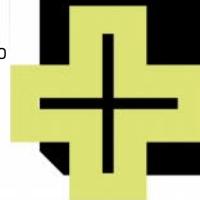
of the victim. You'll reach under the victim to grasp the wrist of the person across from you. Those at each end will use one hand to support the head and feet of the person being moved. Upon command, rescuers will get on one knee and then stand.

Three-person carry: Sometimes, you might have to get a patient onto a higher level than a stretcher on the ground, such

SYMPTOMS OF SPINAL INJURY

When moving a patient, you should be concerned with the possibility of a spinal injury, especially if there is:

- ◀ Head or neck trauma
- ◀ Altered mental status
- ◀ Pain in the head or neck
- ◀ Weakness, numbness or paralysis in the extremities
- ◀ Loss of bladder control
- ◀ Contorted position of head or neck or difficulty moving these areas



TRANSPORT USING NO MATERIALS

There are circumstances in which you might have absolutely nothing at your disposal to help evacuate a patient—other than your own muscles. Here are methods to transport a patient without any equipment:

Three-person team: With a number of assistants, you can form a "hammock" that will make for easier lifting and transport. In this method, rescuers kneel on both sides



"BACK"



It's important to remember the simple acronym, BACK, when transporting a person:

◀ BACK STRAIGHT

Muscles and discs can handle more weight safely when the back is straight.

◀ AVOID TWISTING

Joints can be damaged if twisted.

◀ CLOSE TO BODY

Avoid reaching to pick up a load; it causes more strain on muscles and joints.

◀ KEEP STABLE

The more rotation and jerking, the more pressure on the discs and muscles.

rescuers as a pair of crutches. Each rescuer grabs a wrist and puts the crook of the arm on the back of their neck and over the shoulder, with the other arm around the victim's waist. The victim can then stand with assistance. If unconscious, the waistband or belt can be pulled to help lift the casualty, with their legs dragging behind as you move.

The fore-and-aft technique can serve effectively as a long-distance transport method for conscious or unconscious victims. The first rescuer, from behind, puts his arms under the shoulders of a victim lying on his back and locks his hands around the chest. The second rescuer, facing front toward the feet of the victim, uses both arms to grasp underneath each knee. It is more comfortable if the taller transporter is at the patient's head.



as a gurney or an operating table. For this purpose, the three-person carry is useful to lift a victim for short distances. The transporters, on one knee, roll the patient to his side, facing them. He is then lifted onto their knee, and the team stands on command. The casualty is held on the transporters' chests, and they all start the evacuation using the same foot.

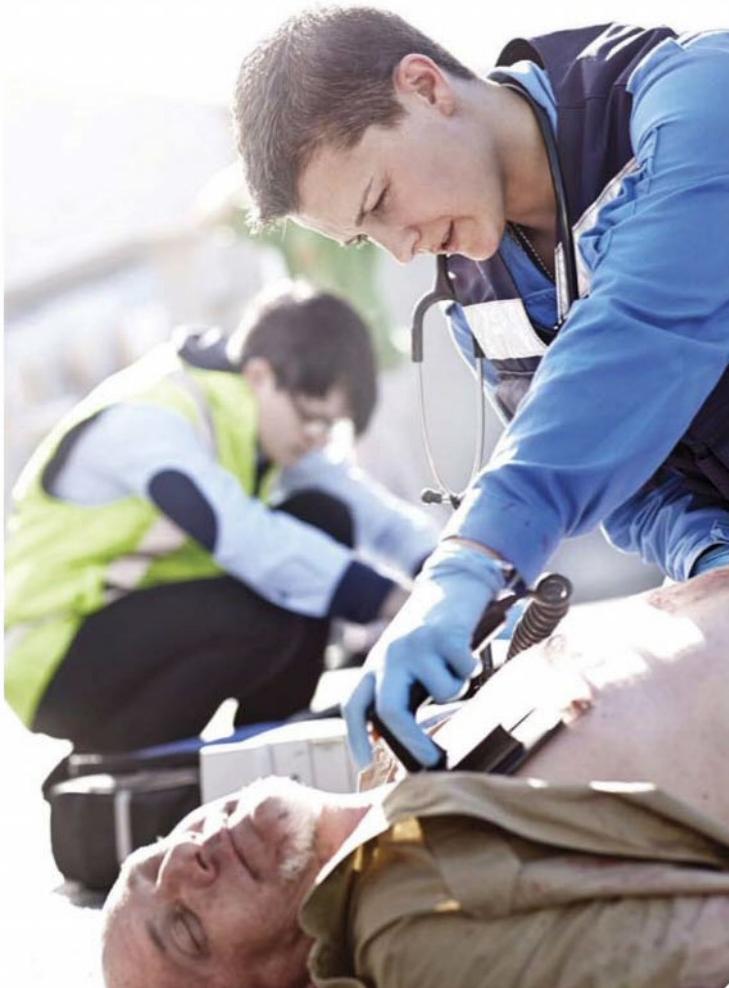
TWO PEOPLE

Four-handed seat: When it's you and one assistant, you have a number of options. If your casualty is conscious and can hold onto your shoulders, you can make a four-handed seat with interlocked wrists. With all four wrists interlocked in a square, a wider, more-stable seat is formed. If one of the rescuers needs a free hand, three wrists can form a triangular seat.

The two-handed seat is meant to provide a seat with a back for victims who might be less alert. Each rescuer interlocks one wrist to form the seat and uses the other arm to grasp his partner's far shoulder. This forms the back support. All versions start with the transporters squatting on either side of the victim, using their legs to lift instead of their backs.

Another two-person lift is the **crutch method.** For a conscious patient, this carry allows the victim to walk using the

► It's important to ensure the patient is stabilized before transporting. This includes making sure their airways are open, bleeding is stopped and other significant injuries are tended to first.



ONE PERSON

There are situations in which it's just you. There is no equipment, and you have to evacuate a patient.

If you are alone with a patient, the **fireman's carry** is effective and keeps the victim's torso relatively level and stable. While squatting or kneeling, grasp the person's right wrist with your left hand and drape it over your shoulders. Keeping your back straight, place your right hand between their legs and around the right thigh. Using your leg muscles to lift, stand up. You should end up with their torso over your back and the right thigh resting over your right shoulder. If you have done this correctly, the patient's left arm and leg will hang behind your back. Adjust the patient's position in order to cause the least strain on you.

Pack-strap carry: Another option when you are the lone rescuer is the pack-strap carry. With the patient behind and facing your back, grasp both arms and cross them across your chest. If you are squatting, keep your back straight; use your legs and back muscles to lift the patient. Bend slightly so that their weight is on your hips, and then lift them off the ground. **ASG**



» Left: The two-man crutch carry



Right: The fore-and-aft carry

"IN A SURVIVAL SETTING, AN INJURY WILL LIKELY OCCUR WITHOUT A COMMERCIALLY MADE STRETCHER READILY AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, ABANDONED RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN URBAN OR RURAL SETTINGS WILL CONTAIN A NUMBER OF FOUND MATERIALS THAT CAN SERVE THE PURPOSE."

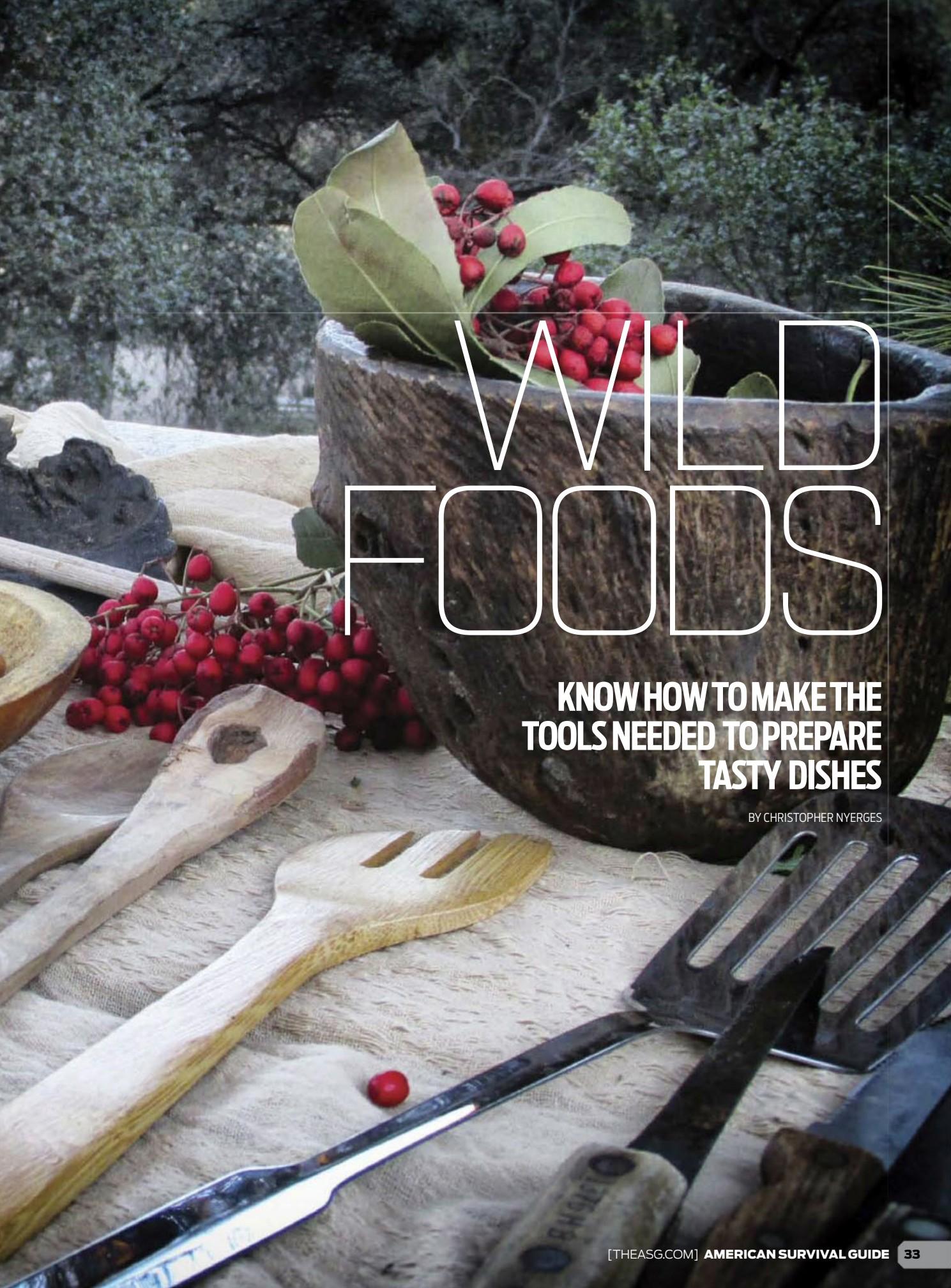
» Below: A soldier employs the fireman's carry to evacuate a wounded comrade.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joe Alton, M.D., is a physician and the co-author of the *Survival Medicine Handbook*, as well as the founder of www.doomandbloom.net.





WILD FOODS

**KNOW HOW TO MAKE THE
TOOLS NEEDED TO PREPARE
TASTY DISHES**

BY CHRISTOPHER NYERGES



Preparing wild foods throughout the year requires the same attention to detail as preparing store-bought vegetables and other foods. Yes, the plants are from the wild, but that doesn't mean the dishes you prepare need to be crude, rough and

harshly flavored. Just as with any other food you serve and eat, you want it to look good, smell good and taste good, right? Even the most nutritious food isn't going to be eaten if people don't enjoy what they are eating.

So, like the cook in a modern kitchen, the bushcraft chef still needs a certain selection of tools to render the food from wild edibles into tasty dishes.

First, though, let's examine the wild foods we're talking about. I eat wild foods regularly at home in the city and even more when I'm out on the trail for the day or a week. I eat what is in season, and sometimes, I store foods for later use, usually by drying them.

“... THE PLANTS ARE FROM THE WILD, BUT THAT DOESN’T MEAN THE DISHES YOU PREPARE NEED TO BE CRUDE, ROUGH AND HARSHLY FLAVORED.”

GREENS

Edible green leaves are widely available throughout the year and throughout the country. Some are more tender and are good in salads; others must be processed in some way and often cooked. These are made into soups, stews and stir-fries and added to omelets.

SEEDS/NUTS

Various seeds, such as acorns, walnuts and other nuts, grass seeds, wild buckwheat, lamb's quarter seed and more, are typically available at the end of the summer and into the fall. These are most often used in stews, bread and pancake batter and, in the case of pine nuts and walnuts, they are sometimes added to dessert items.

FRUITS

Then, there are the fruits, available seasonally from spring into the fall, depending on the type of plant. These are good for sweetening other dishes, for drinks, and for pies and jams.

ROOTS

There are also many useful wild roots, which vary widely in palatability. Some are good raw in salads, although most

must be boiled or cooked to be palatable. Some are spicy hot (such as the outer skin of the radish root) and are used as garnishes for other dishes.

So, these are four broad categories of wild foods; think of them as lettuces and spinaches, rice and wheat, strawberries and grapes, and potatoes, radishes and ginger roots. You use all those foods in your kitchen, right?

KNIVES

You obviously use a variety of knives and tools to process those foods before you bring them to the table. The tools required for the processing of wild foods are very similar.

You can never have too many knives, and that is particularly true in the kitchen. Greens need to be cut and shredded; roots need to be sliced; and fruits need to be chopped. Although there are myriad kitchen tools to do these things, you really need one small and one large knife for most of these chores when in camp or on the trail.

In fact, a Swiss Army knife is ideal, because (if you buy the right one) you have two blades and a saw. The blades are good for most greens and slicing. The saw—which is too little to cut a log—will work well when you need to slice and dice roots.

► Greens can be chopped and diced on a tree stump.



► A potato peeler can be carried, but it can all be done with a Swiss Army knife.

In fact, when you need to grate (for instance, say you want to grate a large root; maybe a burdock root), you can just place the knife perpendicular to the root and stroke back and forth to do your grating.

PEELERS

Sometimes, I carry a common potato peeler in my pack, mostly for peeling the skin off cactus pads. I used to carry it religiously and still do from time to time. However, I find that I can use my large sheath knife for peeling, and it works fine. You're not really doing a lot of peeling with wild foods, anyway, although it does come in handy.

FLIPPERS

I make pancakes a lot, and I typically mix wild seed (either processed acorns,

► Hollowed yucca stalk used for cooking, bark bowl and wooden chop sticks



"NOT MANY WILD FOOD FORAGERS THINK ABOUT MAKING SPROUTS WITH WILD SEEDS, BUT IT CAN BE DONE ... "

wild buckwheat, the seeds of curly dock, lamb's quarter or other wild grasses). Most of the seeds (except acorns) don't require much processing. Simply rub them between your hands, whittle lightly and then mix them 50/50 with flour. Then, add water until you get the right texture. Get your skillet hot, and add the batter.

Nothing flips that pancake as well as a regular pancake flipper. You can buy a little stainless-steel flipper and carry it in your pack. Alternatively, you can whittle one from a piece of bark or wood. I prefer to carry one.

A flipper is also great for turning eggs, mixing soup and scooping greens out of the pot without taking out too much water.

GRATERS

I have carried little cheese graters into the woods, and they can be useful for small roots or cheese. There are little ones

you can buy and carry in your pack, and they can really be useful. As a substitute, use your knife.

GRINDERS

Grinding is used primarily for seeds but could also be used to reduce greens to a pesto-like consistency. You can purchase many kinds of grinders (such as cast-iron, hand-cranked wheat and meat grinders and coffee grinders). In a camp situation, you can do all your grinding on a flat rock using a smaller, fist-sized rock for the grinder.

SPROUTERS

Not many wild food foragers think about making sprouts with wild seeds, but it can be done—with excellent results in many cases. Anyone who has made sprouts at home knows that you soak seeds in a jar for a day. Then, you lay the jar on its side with a cloth lid and rinse it maybe twice a day until you get sprouts big enough to eat.

You probably wouldn't carry a jar on the trail, although you can create a sprout container by using a plastic water bottle and a piece of cotton for the lid. It's easy

to do, and the trick will be to find wild seeds in season that actually sprout. I've found that members of the mustard family sprout really well, along with seeds such as wild radish, mustard, watercress, etc.

SKILLETS

You use various skillets to do your cooking at home. These are also needed while in the woods. I have been laughed at for carrying a small cast iron skillet. Really! There's nothing like a cast iron skillet, and you can find one that is small enough for just one or two servings.

You obviously need something to cook on, and if you don't want to carry cast iron, you can carry an old pie pan. In a pinch, I have used flat and somewhat thin pieces of rock that I found; these were propped up on other rocks with a fire built underneath. Whatever you use as a skillet, make sure to oil it before use.

In addition, don't forget there are many other ways to cook besides in a skillet or on a rock. You can suspend a fish on a stick above the fire and cook potatoes, roots or corn on the cob in the coals. Cook biscuits by placing the dough on rocks that are on the outer perimeter of the fire.

◀ A gourd bowl filled with acorns

◀ Gear—some carried, some made: From top, two rocks used for cutting plants and grinding seeds; wooden spoon, wooden spoon and wooden flipper, all handmade; metal flipper and carried camp knives.



◀ Lightweight tools to carry: a pot, two small cast iron skillets and a stainless-steel Sierra cup.

POTS

Of course, you need a pot to cook in while in the woods. However, I would never take a good pot with me. I nearly always carry a #10 can—a large can in which you can cook soup for a party of four or boil water for coffee. Over time, these cans blacken on the outside, and they actually last a long time if you keep them clean. On the other hand, because it's just an old can, you won't be upset if it gets damaged.

PLATES, BOWLS AND CUPS

It's always a good idea to have something to eat out of; a small, metal plate is easily carried into the bush. But guess what? If you don't have a plate or cup, there are plenty of things in nature that can be used instead. I have quite often used pieces of bark and flat stones for my plate and hollowed-out yucca for my bowl or cup. Bamboo is another great possibility for a "wild" cup.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Chris Nyerges is the author of four books about wild foods, including *Guide to Wild Foods and Useful Plants* and *Foraging Edible Wild Plants of North America*. He has led wild food walks since 1974. He can be reached at www.schoolofself-reliance.com.

BREADBOARD

Every good cook has a favorite breadboard. After all, every bit of your work is being done on a cutting surface of some sort. I like a wooden breadboard made from one solid piece of wood. On the trail, I carry a thin, plastic "breadboard," and it works fine. However, it's usually easy to find the top of a cutoff log or a slabbed piece of wood in the backcountry, so this item is very easy to create.

A WORD ABOUT WILD GAME

I focused mostly on wild plants in this article and didn't mention anything about wild game. Most details about how to prepare wild game have been

done to death in all the fishing and hunting magazines, as well as all the TV programs and YouTube shows on cleaning game.

But, for the record, a group of four of us once fully cleaned a deer in my backyard, and everyone took home meat that would feed them for months. Although I did use one of my sheath knives for the job (with a blade measuring about 3½ inches), I found that my little Swiss Army knife was the most useful. I used the blade for cutting, but I also found the little scissors on the Swiss Army knife incredibly useful for getting into tight spots and making clean cuts. When you're out in the wild, don't leave your Swiss Army knife at home. **ASG**

After water is put into the hollowed yucca stalk, hot rocks that have been heated in the fire are added to the yucca bowl using tongs.



Dude McLean and Alan Halcon level the yucca pot in the sand near the fire.

Very basic must-carry tools: (counterclockwise from the bottom) Swiss Army knife, Sierra cup, metal flipper, Florian clippers, sheath knife

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GROUP COMMUNICATIONS
DURING AN EVACUATION

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JIM JEFFRIES





As a ham radio operator, you are free to choose whatever equipment you wish that meets your communications needs.

It can be complex and include advanced features with extended capabilities, or it can be simple and do the bare minimum to establish reliable communications.

Regardless of what you choose, you, as the sole operator, will eventually master it and become quite proficient. Put that same piece of equipment in the hands of someone who does not share your experience, and the results could be quite different.

SELECTING THE EQUIPMENT

In a group setting, a standardized piece of equipment, whether it is a weapons platform or communications gear, should be settled upon and consistently employed. Each member of the group should have

Having a plan is not enough—practicing the plan together beforehand will expose any weakness and offer an opportunity to take corrective measures.

experience using the same equipment and will be able to assist others if a problem arises (at least to some degree). Having a group standard also ensures that a part or accessory for that piece of gear—for instance, a charging handle for a rifle or a charging cradle for a radio—is interchangeable.

It is important to consider the abilities of the group as a whole when choosing communications gear. If there is little time (or willingness) for training and conducting field exercises, only the most basic equipment might be permissible; complicated radios will lead to confusion—and ultimately, failure—in high-stress situations. If all members are able to spend time in training, more-advanced gear might be suitable.

Of course, the equipment selected must be capable of meeting the requirements set forth by the group. It should have a minimum transmit/receive range of several miles simplex (not using repeaters) in the terrain in which the group normally operates, and it must be reliable in the environment in which it will be used (wet climates require greater water resistance than arid climates). These are just examples; your group might have additional specific requirements.

Another factor when deciding on gear purchases is cost. If members are expected to purchase their own equipment to comply with the group standard, something affordable to all members must be chosen (unless some type of financial assistance or other options are available). Consider making a group purchase: Buying several of the same items at one time can sometimes result in a discounted price.

At a minimum, each group member should have some type of HT (handheld transceiver). If a group is broken down into teams, one member of each team could be selected to be equipped with more-capable gear in addition to the standard HT. This





"IT IS CRUCIAL THAT INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS ARE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM, BUT THE TEAM MUST ALSO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE REST OF THE GROUP."

will provide enhanced communication capabilities for the team.

A good example would be to include a more powerful mobile transceiver, along with an appropriate antenna for the frequency on which it operates. This could greatly extend the effective communications range of the team when deployed far away from its home station. Batteries for powering the mobile radio could be distributed throughout the team to spread the added weight.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

It is crucial that individual team members are able to effectively communicate with other members of the team, but the team must also be able to communicate with the rest of the group. Two different frequencies might require an additional radio to be carried by at least one member of the team. Separate "channels" could be used for different purposes—an intra-team channel for communications at the team level and a "command" channel to communicate with other teams in the group. Using a specific frequency at the team level will eliminate interference with "higher-level" radio traffic taking place on another frequency.

Team radios could be VHF (offering good range in open terrain) or UHF (for better performance in urban environments) and would normally be used for short-range communications. Using frequencies that

► Antennas with magnetic bases allow attachment to most any vehicle in seconds and can be instantly transferred from one vehicle to another.

► These radios can be recharged in the field using 12-volt batteries in the packs. These same batteries can also be used to power a mobile transceiver.

► The three radios on the left are capable of covering the 2-meter ham band, MURS and business bands, allowing them to interoperate with the VHF business band radios on the right.



do not require a license would allow anyone to use them. Having a licensed ham on the team could greatly increase the team's communications capabilities due to the greater transmit power possible with amateur radio equipment that is approved by the FCC (Federal Communications Commission).

RADIO SERVICE BANDS

Handheld transceivers operating on the amateur 2-meter band, depending on terrain and other factors, typically provide effective radio communications up to 10 miles—and

"CONSIDER MAKING A GROUP PURCHASE: BUYING SEVERAL OF THE SAME ITEMS AT ONE TIME CAN SOMETIMES RESULT IN A DISCOUNTED PRICE."



sometimes, much farther—even with the original factory antenna. Replacing the less-efficient stubby antenna with a higher-gain model will dramatically increase the usable range, even on lower power settings. UHF radios operating on the amateur 70-centimeter band will offer similar results but might be less affected by structures in a heavily built-up urban setting and will also benefit from a better antenna.

In the United States, other radio service bands worth considering are MURS



Using an earbud and shoulder-mounted microphone allows only the user to hear the radio, as well as transmit voice communication at just a whisper. The more effective whip antenna is a direct replacement for the factory "rubber ducky" antenna.

(Multi-Use Radio Service) and PLMR (Private Land Mobile Radio, sometimes called “business band” radio), both of which are in the VHF region. MURS offers five channels of license-free, two-way operation but has a 2-watt maximum power limit.

PLMR provides more channels and permits higher power levels to be used but does require a license for legal operation. For UHF frequencies, the GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service) offers 23 channels, along with a 5-watt ERP (effective radiated power) limit. GMRS has a few rules regarding antenna height but does allow for installation of external antennas—as long as the ERP does not exceed the 5-watt limit; ERP increases as antenna gain increases.

Due to rules set forth by the FCC, FRS (Family Radio Service) walkie-talkies must have permanently installed antennas and can't exceed 500 milliwatts (0.5 watts) of output power. Many of these pocket-sized radios also include the GMRS frequencies, but the radio design must still conform to the non-removable antenna restriction, thereby leaving most of the GMRS benefit unrealized (for



GROUP COMMUNICATIONS DURING AN EVACUATION

An evacuation, whether voluntary or mandatory, might immediately drop you into a survival situation: You are being forced to leave the safety and sanctuary of your home, traveling with only the belongings you can fit in your vehicle or on your back. Your security and that of your loved ones rest squarely on your shoulders.

Fortunately, you belong to a group of like-minded people who share this burden. All members of your group have the gear necessary to increase their chances of survival. You have sat down together, discussed the possibilities, and have planned and prepared for them. You have practiced—individually and as a group—for this scenario. You have the means to defend yourself and the group as a whole. Unfortunately, this all falls apart if you can't stay together as a cohesive group.

Communications play a vital role in cooperative groups. Being able to convey your intentions, pass information or issue warnings all require both you and the other party to be able to understand one another. This can be accomplished with speech or hand signals when you are close together. However, a different means of communicating must be used when far apart. Radio communications fulfill this requirement.

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATIONS

When travelling in a convoy of vehicles, each vehicle should have, at a minimum, a handheld two-way radio. If there is a mobile radio installed in the vehicle, there should be a handheld radio present, as well.

All handheld radios must be set to the same frequency so vehicles can communicate with each other, as well as monitor communications among other vehicles in the convoy.

If there is an alert or instruction that needs to be passed to all vehicles, it can be done in one transmission; if any vehicle has a problem or request, all vehicles can immediately be made aware via radio.

REPEATERS

Mobile radios should be free to work on frequencies other than the one dedicated to group communications; there will most likely be abundant radio traffic concerning the event that prompted the evacuation on area repeaters by hams participating in an Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) or a Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) network.

Both of these volunteer services are active throughout the United States to assist local authorities during emergencies. Monitoring these repeaters can provide warnings, advisories and other crucial information. At least one vehicle in the convoy should be doing just that.

While important news and information will be broadcast on AM and FM radio stations, it will usually be old information and will most likely omit many facts. In contrast, information coming over the amateur repeaters will be more timely and can provide additional details regarding what is happening or might be about to happen. This information could be indispensable for decision-making.





"SEPARATE 'CHANNELS' COULD BE USED FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES—AN INTRA-TEAM CHANNEL FOR COMMUNICATIONS AT THE TEAM LEVEL AND A 'COMMAND' CHANNEL TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER TEAMS IN THE GROUP."

► Although a mobile radio might not be quite as convenient as an HT, the ability to place the antenna high in the air, as well as its higher-output power capability, might justify its use as a portable field communications station. Of course, this same antenna can be connected to a handheld to achieve similar performance ... but sometimes, you have to make do with what you have.



FCC-approved FRS/GMRS combination radios, the license requirement for GMRS operation does not apply).

Even though FRS radios are not the best choice for real-world field communications, they are very useful for training sessions or entertaining children. Given the profusion of these radios in use all over the country, the FRS and GMRS frequencies should definitely be included in any RF spectrum monitoring strategy.

(Note: The radio services, as well as the regulations discussed in this article, apply to the United States. Other countries might have different services and rules that have not been presented here.)

Many two-way radios have the ability to accept headsets or earbud-lapel microphone accessories. This allows the radio to be carried on a belt, backpack or vest, keeping the hands free for carrying items or performing various tasks. Some radios have voice-activated transmit capability—known as VOX—that automatically switches the radio between "receive" and "transmit" modes when the operator starts talking.

VOX operation can be tricky in a noisy environment, because the radio might start transmitting anytime a loud noise is present. This can make other communications impossible until the noise stops and the transmitting radio switches back to "receive." VOX could still be valuable in situations in which background noise levels are usually low and any hand movement required to press a transmit button would be a concern. Using headsets will also reduce the chance of sounds from the radio's speaker being heard by anyone other than the wearer.

PRIVACY CODES

Amateur radio rules prohibit any type of encryption of signals to be used (with only a couple of exceptions that do not pertain to this topic). Consequently, any communications carried out on amateur radio will be clearly received by anyone listening on those frequencies.

If your communications require secrecy for whatever reason, you will need to seek out equipment that does what you need. Alternatively, you might want to devise a communications plan that uses words or phrases to convey your meaning without compromising your group. So-called "privacy codes" or "private line tones" (PL tones) offer no privacy—any receiver tuned to the frequency will be able to hear all transmissions, privacy coded or not. **ASG**

"IN A GROUP SETTING, A STANDARDIZED PIECE OF EQUIPMENT, WHETHER IT IS A WEAPONS PLATFORM OR COMMUNICATIONS GEAR, SHOULD BE SETTLED UPON AND CONSISTENTLY EMPLOYED."

► A mobile 2-meter radio deployed as a portable station, powered by a 12-volt sealed lead acid battery and connected to a homemade dipole antenna. Getting the antenna as high as possible will increase the range. But even low to the ground, it is much more effective than a typical handheld radio. The complete station fits nicely in a backpack.

► Having tough equipment in adverse weather conditions is a must. The Yaesu FT-60 (right) is water resistant and has no problem withstanding wet environments, including heavy rain. The FT-270 (left), also by Yaesu, takes it a step further and is waterproof to a depth of 3 feet for 30 minutes.







OWN THE NIGHT!

**AFRAID OF THE DARK?
FORGET IT ... WITH A MODERN NVD!**

STORY BY TERRILL HOFFMAN

t had been three days since the power went out, and no one had any idea of what disaster had befallen their quiet, little suburb. Lights and automobiles had just quit functioning, and any radios that worked just had the sound of static and dead air.

During the day, the occupants of this small neighborhood would venture out to see if anyone had heard any news about what was happening; but at night, each family huddled in the darkness of their homes. The only light was coming from distant fires burning somewhere in the city, a mere 10 miles away.

It was the fourth day when Henry noticed the house at the end of the street had been vandalized. A few windows were shattered, and the front door was wide open. That very night, he heard Doug, his next door neighbor, opening his garage door to pull out a mountain bike with a small, attached trailer. Henry had always thought Doug was a little strange; even so, taking a bike ride after dark and under these conditions just didn't make sense. He had no idea that he would never see Doug again.

It was only an hour or so later that Henry heard the sounds of someone outside. Thinking that Doug might have returned and that he might have gathered some information about the current state of affairs, Henry opened his front door. He stood on his porch, silhouetted by the light from a single candle burning in his living room as he peered into the darkness.

His family would never know if Henry felt the pellets entering his body. Did he feel the pain before he saw the muzzle flash and heard the sound of the shotgun being fired?



◀ There are times when thermal units are the better choice for spotting your "game," but night vision offers better identification abilities.



◀ A good head mount gives you a hands-free mode for using your PVS-14, but I wouldn't consider it comfortable. I saved money by buying a surplus unit. You should consider buying a spare.



◀ Several companies make their own versions of the PVS-14, but I chose TNVC for its customer service, known quality of manufacture and its five-year warranty. The PVS-14 is the "jack of all trades" in the NV world and offers the best versatility.



"OUR INTELLECT, AS WELL AS OUR ABILITY TO MAKE AND USE TOOLS, HAS PROPELLED MANKIND TO THE TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN. BUT AFTER THE SUN GOES DOWN, WE ARE SIMPLY PREY TO THE TWO- AND FOUR-LEGGED PREDATORS OF THE NIGHT."

SPECIFICATIONS

TNVC/PVS-14 L3 Gen3 OMNI VIII

- › DIMENSIONS: 4.5 inches (L) x 2.0 inches (W) x 2.25 inches (H)
- › WEIGHT: 12.4 ounces
- › POWER: One (1) standard AA battery
- › BATTERY LIFE: Approximately 50 hours at room temperature
- › WATERPROOF: 60 feet for two hours
- › WARRANTY: Five-year warranty

FICTION AND REALITY

This account might only be a few paragraphs of fiction, but we can still gather tidbits of truth if we read between the lines. First, no one really knows what might happen tomorrow or when we might be forced to face a drastic change in our lifestyles. The scenario depicted (as well as many others) could transcend from fiction to fact at any moment.

Nevertheless, Henry is a perfect example of most of mankind. Take away his electric lights, and he can only really function during sunlight hours. At night, he must retreat to the confines of his home—reminiscent of early man hiding in his cave. Our intellect, as well as our ability to make and use tools, has propelled mankind to the top of the food chain. But after the sun goes down, we are simply prey to the two- and four-legged predators of the night.

If you are wondering what happened to Doug, his story ended on a more optimistic note: His mountain bike and trailer enabled him to ride safely to a retreat he had prepared years before. The fact that he had obtained a night vision device (NVD) allowed him to travel under the cover of darkness and avoid the potential perils of the trip. Doug might have been the “odd duck” of the neighborhood, but he was prepared to provide for his own safety.

It was this same desire to be prepared that started me on an 18-month adventure investigating the various night vision options available to the average citizen.

I must admit that I took advantage of my position as a writer for our sister publication, *World of Firepower*. Over the past year and a half, I have arranged to review, test and evaluate various NVDs from some of the major companies in the market. My findings have been

printed in the past issues of the magazine, and it is not my purpose here to recount the various reviews.

However, several people have asked me what products I would choose for my own personal needs, and they thought this information might be useful to the readers of *American Survival Guide*.

It only took a short period of time for me to learn two basic factors about night vision: It can be very useful and very expensive. My personal shopping list would be much longer if I were given an unlimited budget. However, my last name isn't Trump, and I don't drive a Mercedes, so I was forced to work with the realistic budget of an average middle-class husband and father.

At the same time, even though I consider myself to be king of my realm and master of my own castle, my wife's approval of any expenditure is vital. I can happily report that she also tried the products during the testing and saw their usefulness; in fact, it was my wife who announced when it was time to make a purchase.

NIGHT VISION VS. THERMAL

Currently, there are two major categories of NVDs. The first is labeled “night vision” and works on the principle of magnifying ambient light. These devices can take mere starlight and magnify it to the point of duplicating sunlight. Just about all of us have seen these products depicted in

"SEVERAL COMPANIES OFFER THE SAME MODEL, BUT I CHOSE TO GO WITH TACTICAL NIGHT VISION COMPANY (TNVC) FOR MY PURCHASE FOR ONE MAJOR REASON: THIS COMPANY OFFERS A FIVE-YEAR WARRANTY."

movies and television programs, and most of them have a classic green tinge to the image.

The second is "thermal imaging," which separates objects by the amount of heat each emits. The image shown can be in various shades of gray, with the hottest objects showing up as black—or in reverse, with the hottest objects showing as white. Many thermal units even offer the choice of viewing objects in shades of red or other colors.

After using both, I have found that for general viewing and clarity, night vision is more natural to viewers. However, if you want the best to spot an object such as a game animal, thermal has an edge. The body heat generated by a human or animal will make it pop out in comparison to its surroundings, even at a distance, but to make proper identification, night vision is more valuable.

It should be noted that night vision will not work with a total absence of light. Good units will work with just starlight (even the light behind clouds) and really "shine" when used under any form of moonlight. Thermal does not require light to operate, because even in total darkness, objects still emit heat.

If I were using these tools strictly for hunting, I would opt for a good thermal device, but because I wanted to have the option of multiple uses, my choice was night vision.

NIGHT VISION

Just to make things a bit more complicated: Night vision comes in various "generations," or levels. The original night vision could be called the "0" generation, because it was manufactured before the various generation labels were applied to night vision. The 0 generation is no longer made, and we can totally forget about it. The remainder of the night vision devices is labeled first, second and third generation. Each generation represents a major improvement in the ability to magnify existing light.

This is the point at which I might offend, but keep in mind that this entire feature is based on my own opinions. On the other

hand, I could never be considered a "PC" type of guy, and I really don't worry about hurting someone's self-esteem. Buck up and handle it.

First-generation night vision can now be considered nothing but a toy. There was a time when it was the best out there and your only choice, but those days are long gone. Yes, they are the least expensive units made, but if you want any satisfaction at all, I would suggest ignoring the temptation of a low price. I have seen these units priced from a couple of hundred dollars up to close to one thousand dollars. In my eyes, the only difference in price between these units is simply the amount of money you want to waste.

Second- and third-generation units represent a major improvement in image quality. A simple ballpark amount for second-gen units could be about \$1,500, and third-gen units start close to \$3,000. Of course, these prices are just ballpark and can vary a few hundred dollars in both directions and from company to company.

If I had never used a third-gen unit, I might have been happy with a good second-gen model. Alas, I tested both and chose to save a little more money before making a purchase. I also had the pleasure of using a couple of IR (infrared) "illuminators" (a fancy name for an IR flashlight) while using both second- and third-gen units. These illuminators brought the level of a second-gen unit up close to that of a third-gen unit and made the third-gen units pure magic.

PRODUCT MODELS

During these last 18 months, I tried products from several different companies and noticed a similarity in their products. I also discovered that only a few companies make intensifier tubes, which are the heart of night vision devices, and that all other companies use the tubes from these few manufacturers.

I will admit that although I could easily tell the difference between different generations of tubes, I could not tell a noticeable difference between tube manufacturers. I am sure there are people with a much higher understanding of intensifier tubes than I have, and you might want to research this aspect more before you make your purchase—or, you might be like me and find a unit you're happy with and go for it.

NVDs also come in various styles—monoculars, binoculars and dedicated weapon scopes. The monoculars were the lightest and easiest to use. You simply turn the on/off switch and hold it up to your eye. Some of the binoculars were nothing more than two monoculars mounted together, while others were more of a standard binocular pattern.

The dedicated night vision scopes were the largest units and basically oversized versions of daylight rifle scopes. Many companies offer models that look almost identical, because they use housings that are surplus, contract overruns or newly manufactured versions of designs used by our military.

Another aspect of the various units is their power supply. They are all battery operated, and I have noticed that the battery type can vary from model to model; and, in some cases, you might find a model that is available with different battery types. Take into account the availability and price of various batteries when making your purchase.

PUTTING MY MONEY WHERE MY MOUTH IS

After all this, you might wonder what I chose and why. Again, with an unlimited budget, I would pick a monocular for my general viewing, a binocular for my wife and a dedicated weapon scope for mounting on a dedicated nighttime AR-15. Just for jollies, I would also pick up a handheld thermal unit to match the thermal scope for a second rifle. (If any of you happen to bump into "The Donald," please let him know I am up for adoption.)

The bottom line? I selected what is known as a PVS-14 with a third-generation intensifier tube. This is a monocular that operates off a single AA battery. The same model can be purchased with a second-gen tube—with a major savings. This unit is small, compact and offers the greatest versatility.

I live out in the middle of nowhere; at night, my wife and I often sit on my deck, watching

► If you really want to go all out, you might consider the Wilcox Raptar Lite ES. It has a "white light," IR illuminator, visible red laser and an IR laser built into one unit. You could wear your PVS-14 head mount and then aim, using the Wilcox laser.

► A high-quality night vision scope such as the Gladius 760 by Night Optics is ideal as a dedicated rifle scope, but it is a little bulky as a handheld viewing device. You either have to have one rifle set up for nothing but nighttime use or deal with zero (sight-in point of aim) shift every time you remove the NV scope.

► Everyone knows how to use a flashlight. It can be mounted to your weapon rather easily, but it is the quickest way to spook wildlife. Remember, even those outside your beam of light will know where you are.

the wildlife. My NVD monocular has a simple on/off control, as well as a simple twist focus, if needed. In fact, my wife has thoroughly enjoyed using it almost every night.

Unlike some units, it does not have any magnification of the image. Nevertheless, it is still useful out to 100-plus yards. Several companies offer the same model, but I chose to go with Tactical Night Vision Company (TNVC) for my purchase for one major reason: This company offers a five-year warranty.

Once I had this basic unit (patterned after the military version), I was able to start expanding its usefulness by adding to my "night vision kit." This is also where I was able to go cheap on a few accessories.

The basic unit came from TNVC with what is known as a "J" mount, which is nothing more than a mounting arm that allows the unit to be used with either a helmet (with a helmet mount) or a headband (which has garnered the nickname, "skull-crusher"). I will admit that I look a



little foolish with the headband in place, but it does position the PVS-14 perfectly in front of my right eye and allows my left eye to maintain its night vision—a hands-free solution. It does take a bit of practice to get used to riding my ATV after dark, and I've noticed that my depth perception is more limited.

For my hunting, defensive and offensive needs, the PVS-14 can be mounted behind a red-dot or holographic sight, enabling nighttime use of your rifle. Because it is located behind the sight, it can be attached and removed without affecting the sight-in of your optic. This was one reason I did not opt for a night vision scope.

You can also remove the scope and use it as a handheld unit. However, it would be somewhat bulky, and you would never be assured of an exact repeatable sight-in.

There are several mounts available from various sources for mounting the PVS-14 to the Picatinny rail of your rifle, but the

cheapest option is to buy a military surplus mount from a site such as eBay. My optic-of-choice was an Aimpoint PRO that had a night vision setting, as well as true red-dot settings.

The battery life for this optic is measured in years instead of hours. Never use a red-dot sight that does not have night vision capability listed as one of its features. The night vision will see the dot of a standard red-dot sight, but having that light in front of your NVD will eventually burn in the dot on your tube.

Another item I purchased ended up not being the value I thought it would be. This was a 3x magnifier that would fit on the front of the PVS-14. It worked but diminished the brightness of the unit, and I really didn't find it a great benefit. As is, without the 3x unit attached, anything within the "effective" range of an AR-15 can be targeted.

My last purchase was an IR illuminator by Streamlight. It is seldom needed with the third-gen tube, but it does light up the countryside. However, there are times when it could be useful: One aspect of using an illuminator is that it becomes a beacon to your location should someone else be wearing night vision. A major value of night vision is being able to see after dark without you being seen. As our military has proven, there is a substantial tactical value involved with the use of NVDs.

FACT AND FICTION

The learning curve involved with night vision really isn't that long, but it does exist. As with your weapons, you should train regularly to obtain the best value from your purchase.

For those who might wonder why I did not mention the use of an IR laser with night vision, I will admit that I did test it. However, lasers are not legal for hunting in my home state, and I would never use a laser on anyone, unless I were prepared to pull the trigger.

I will say that with the PVS-14 mounted to a helmet or used with the headband, an IR laser does allow for a shoulder-mounted version of "point shooting." If you have thought about using an optic to aim with the night vision head mounted, realize that it is a slow and clumsy effort.



► The goal is to see without being seen. "Henry" does stand a chance after the sun goes down, and even though he is armed in this situation, he is the prey.



► The Aimpoint PRO (patrol rifle optic) is NV compatible and has a battery life that is measured in years. You can leave it turned on 24/7 for instant use. I change the battery once a year and never have to worry about it.

If Henry had owned an NVD, he could have scanned his neighborhood and used the darkness to his advantage. At least Doug was able to ride off to a happy end. By leaving at night and using his NVD, he avoided the masses of people he would encounter during the day. Additionally, few were even aware he was passing by.

At the moment, I am totally satisfied with my purchases. Nevertheless, as time passes and I replenish my funds, I might be able to add to my night vision kit. **ASG**

◀ A simple and inexpensive surplus mount will allow the PVS-14 to be mounted behind the aim point, converting your rifle for use after the sun goes down. Because the NVD is behind the red dot, it does not affect the point-of-aim, and it can be installed or removed in just seconds.



"AFTER USING BOTH, I HAVE FOUND THAT FOR GENERAL VIEWING AND CLARITY, NIGHT VISION IS MORE NATURAL TO VIEWERS."



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GEAR GUIDE

FISHING ON THE MOVE

PACK RODS AND THEIR PLACE IN YOUR SURVIVAL GEAR

BY DANA BENNER

I have always carried an emergency fishing kit in my pack. It is nothing more than some fishing line and a few hooks, but it will do the job in an emergency situation. Over the years, I have come to the conclusion that there might be a better and easier way to get most things done. Fishing is no different.

In any survival situation, procuring food is necessary; and, in many cases, fishing is one of the easiest ways to do it. I'm not saying that fishing is easy, but if you have the patience and the tools to do it, fish can be caught.

The pack rod is one of those tools that will help keep you fed.

The idea of pack rods is nothing new. The 1970s were a time when people were looking to "get back in touch with nature." More and more people were hiking and camping in wilderness areas—often ill prepared, but going out, nonetheless. Those who brought fishing gear soon realized how cumbersome it was while trying to hike to some remote pond or stream.

Back then, many standard rods were one piece and made of fiberglass. Sometimes, the result was a broken rod before the destination was ever reached.

Fishing rod manufacturers saw a need for a rod that could be taken apart and easily transported: the pack rod. Keep in

mind that these rods were not designed as "survival" items; rather, they were intended for the weekend outdoorsperson. As a result, many of these multi-segmented rods tended to fall far short of expectations. They wouldn't hold up, they cast poorly and were basically little more than novelty pieces.

There have been many new improvements to fishing gear over the years, but the concept of the pack rod has never gone away. New materials and designs have made them stronger and lighter.

With that in mind, it is time to take a look at the pack rod as a survival tool.

The data for this article came from testing many different rods and reels from many different manufacturers. The rods were broken down into two categories: true pack rods and travel rods. Because of their size and weight, pack rods can be easily carried in your pack or bugout bag. Travel rods are designed to be taken on vacation by the average person.

As a result of testing these two styles, I discovered two that were great for storing with your other survival gear in your vehicle.

The testing was the same for each rod/reel combination and was planned to simulate the conditions and treatment this equipment would go through in a survival situation. The tests included castability, strength, durability and pack ability. After each test, the rod/reel combination got a rating between 1 and 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

To keep the testing unbiased, I enlisted the aid of hunting and fishing buddy Ryan to help with the testing. The top four pack rods were the Kayak King spinning rod by Emmrod, coupled with a Zebco Adventure spinning reel spooled with 10-pound test line; Trophy Stalker telescopic spinning rod by South Bend, coupled with a matching spinning reel spooled with 6-pound test line; Telecast telescoping spinning rod by Quantum, coupled with a Quantum Fire spinning reel spooled with 6-pound test Stren Easy Cast line; and the R2F telescoping spinning rod put out by Big Game International, coupled with a matching reel spooled with 6-pound test line.

The top two travel rods were the South Bend Raven spinning rod with matching reel spooled with 10-pound test line and the Fenwick Methods spinning rod, coupled with a Pflueger Patriarch reel spooled with 8-pound test Berkley Trilene line.

PACK RODS

Kayak King: The Kayak King by Emmrod is the most unusual rod we tested. This is a two-piece rod that measures only 14 inches when broken down and weighs 9 ounces—making it



› The Kayak King is a true pack rod. Once the author's fishing buddy, Ryan, got used to casting such a short rod, he found it surprisingly effective.

GEAR

GUIDE

the ultimate pack rod. Fully assembled, the entire piece measures just 28 inches.

What really makes this rod unique and the most durable rod we tested is the stainless-steel rod portion that is unlike any other on the market. The way the two sections fit together was impressive and made it fishable without the worry of the rod coming apart (something you need to keep in mind when fishing with any sectional rod). Unlike other rods, where the weight of the fish is absorbed in the rod's handle, The Kayak King's weight and power are controlled by the coils that are formed in the rod. The more coils, the more fish-fighting power in the rod. The rod we tested had eight coils.

Both Ryan and I were amazed at the casting distance of such a small rod,

"IN ANY SURVIVAL SITUATION, PROCURING FOOD IS NECESSARY; AND, IN MANY CASES, FISHING IS ONE OF THE EASIEST WAYS TO DO IT."

R2F Spinning

Specifications

- Strength: 5
- Durability: 4

The fiberglass construction comes into play.

- Castability: 5
- Packability: 3

The drawback is the size when collapsed and the added weight.

MSRP

\$30

URL

www.ready2fish.net



◀ The matching R2F reel gives perfect balance to the R2F spinning rod combination.



◀ To prevent damage during transport, the R2F rod has a rod tip guard.



➤ Because of the Telecast's telescoping rod, it fits nicely in a pack.

Quantum Fishing Telecast

Specifications

- Strength: 5
- Durability: 5
- Castability: 5
- Packability: 5

MSRP

\$75

(when combined with the Quantum Fire 10 reel)

URL

www.quantumfishing.com



➤ The graphite construction and small size of the Quantum Telecast make it a perfect pack rod.



although it did take some getting used to. Once we adjusted to it, we were able to cast a 1/4-ounce Little Cleo spoon with no problem. The Zebco reel that came with the rod was extremely smooth, and neither of us could find any flaws.

With a price point at around \$80, this rod is a good investment—especially when Emmrod offers a lifetime warranty.

Trophy Stalker: The Trophy Stalker is a great rod-and-reel setup for those looking for right-out-of-the-box type of gear. I am not one of those people, but with that said, I really liked the feel of this rod. This telescoping rod measures 5 feet when fully extended but only 17 inches when collapsed. The fiberglass rod makes the entire system extremely light, although it does compromise its overall strength.

The only flaw I found with this setup (besides that it is made of fiberglass) was the pre-spoiled reel that came with the rod. If you buy this or any pre-spoiled reel, I would highly recommend re-spooling it. The line came off the Trophy Stalker's reel in huge

coils, resulting in a tangled mess. Other than that, the reel is perfectly matched to the rod, making it feel balanced in your hand.

Once the line situation was dealt with, this light-action rod made casting a 1/4-ounce Acme Kastmaster spoon almost effortless. The rod's small size and light weight make up for any shortcomings it might have. With a price point at around \$30, this is a great rod for those on a tight budget.

R2F Spinning: This rod was a joy to

GEAR

use, although it was one of the longer rods tested. It is a medium-light-action rod that measures 66 inches when fully extended and 21 inches when fully collapsed. This, combined with the added weight of the larger reel, made this rod/reel combination borderline in regard to being a "survival" pack rod.

Where this rod excelled was in its castability and its strength when fighting a fish—despite its fiberglass construction. During the testing, while using a worm

"WHAT REALLY MAKES THIS ROD UNIQUE AND THE MOST DURABLE ROD WE TESTED IS THE STAINLESS-STEEL ROD PORTION THAT IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER ON THE MARKET."



Emmrod Kayak King

Specifications

- Strength: 5
- Durability: 5

This rod gets a 5 in both strength and durability, based on its stainless-steel construction and its way of using the spring instead of the rod handle to fight the fish.

- Castability: 4

The lower score here only reflects the learning curve associated with trying to master casting such a small rod.

- Packability: 5

I wish I could give this rod a 6 or higher, simply because it was the only rod tested that really was designed to be used in a "survival" pack.

MSRP

\$80

URL

www.emmrod.com

◀ The Zebco Adventure reel is the perfect match for the short Kayak King rod.

► The Raven rod combination and case. Packed into its case, the Raven fits nicely in a truck.

► The South Bend Raven, which comes in six pieces, is a great rod to have in your gear.



South Bend Raven

Specifications

- Strength: 4

This rod had too many segments. The joints where the segments meet are always the weakest points on any multipiece rod.

- Durability: 5

While fiberglass construction is always a concern, the fact that the rod is stored and transported in a foam-lined case negates this concern.

- Castability: 4

Being a longer rod, the Raven did cast very well. The perfect match between the rod and reel makes up for the multiple segments.

- Packability: 5

The case says it all.

MSRP

\$30

URL

www.south-bend.com

as bait, I caught a 16-inch, 2-pound rainbow trout. This heavier rod had no problem handling the fish.

Besides the increased weight and length, the biggest drawback to this rod-and-reel combination was that it was made out of fiberglass. However, I really liked it.

With a price of around \$30, I would overlook the size and weight and put it in my pack.

Telecast: Of all the telescopic rods tested, the Quantum's Telecast was one of my favorites. This light-action rod measures 5 feet, 6 inches when fully extended and only about 18 inches when collapsed, thus making it a great option for a survival pack rod. Extremely light, even with the reel, this rod has great casting ability.

The Telecast is also the only graphite pack rod we tested, combining light weight with strength of the graphite construction. Coupled with the Quantum Fire 10 reel, the price point is around \$75, which is not bad for what you get.

TRAVEL RODS

While pack rods are good when you are carrying everything on your back, if you are like me, you also have your vehicle equipped with survival supplies.

This is where travel rods really shine. Most travel rods come with a protective case and are small enough to be easily stored with your other gear.

Raven: The Raven by South Bend is a six-piece, medium-action, fiberglass rod that comes with a matching reel

GEAR

pre-spoiled with 10-pound test line. When fully assembled, the rod is 6 feet long. The entire rod/reel combination comes in a foam-lined case that is easily stored.

With any multipiece rod, you will lose something. It may be strength or castability, but the bottom line is that something will be lost.

That being said, I really like the Raven.

"BY FAR, THIS WAS ONE OF THE BEST RODS TESTED, BUT ITS PRICE MAY BE OUT OF REACH FOR PEOPLE LOOKING FOR A ROD TO USE IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY."

Fenwick Methods

Specifications

- Strength: 5
- Durability: 5

The graphite construction plus the limited amount of segments makes this rod

• extremely strong and durable.

• Castability: 4

All the factors mentioned above, along with its total length, make for pinpoint casts, although its length is a drawback when fishing in very tight cover.

• Packability: 5

Its tube-style case makes for easy storage in your vehicle.

MSRPs

\$150 (Methods rod)
\$200 (Pflueger Patriarch reel)

URL

www.fenwickfishing.com

◀ The Pflueger Patriarch reel is a lightweight, yet tough reel that works well on any rod. It comes with an extra spool for quick and easy line changes.



◀ The Methods three-piece rod is strong and durable. The case makes it packable in any situation.



► The Trophy Stalker rod, coupled with the matching Trophy Stalker reel, is extremely light and capable of putting fish on the table.

Its fiberglass construction didn't concern me very much, because it travels protected in the case. The rod and reel are perfectly matched. As a result, the castability of this combination is pretty good, despite the many rod segments. With a price in the \$30 range, it is a good, inexpensive rod.

Methods: The Methods rod by Fenwick is a three-piece graphite, medium-light-action rod. It measures 80 inches when fully assembled and weighs only 5.87 ounces (without a reel). The Pflueger Patriarch reel adds another 5.6 ounces to the package. When broken down, the rod fits neatly into a protective carrying tube.

The Methods rod has two things going for it: First is the number of segments; second is its graphite construction. These two factors increase strength, durability and casting.

By far, this was one of the best rods tested, but its price may be out of reach for people looking for a rod to use in the case of an emergency. The Methods rod sells for about \$150, and the Pflueger Patriarch reel runs around \$200.

THE ROD THAT FITS YOUR NEEDS

The quality of tools available to anglers has progressed light years since the 1970s. The bottom line isn't what I think—it is what *you* think.

My father always said to get the very best tools you can afford. The best tool is not always the most expensive one. It is the one that best fits your needs. Before investing in a rod to add to your survival gear, weigh everything out. Ask yourself some pertinent questions: Is it too large? Does it weigh too much? Cost too much?

Ultimately, this particular tool—a fishing rod—might be used to help feed you and your family, so get the proper one that works the best for you. There is a great deal of information out there. Gather it all so you can make the right choice. **ASG**

South Bend Trophy Stalker

Specifications

- Strength: 3
- Durability: 3

This rating reflects the fiberglass construction. With fiberglass, you get lighter weight at the expense of strength. For the weekend angler, that is fine, but as a survival tool, the rod might not hold up to the abuse.

- Castability: 5
- Packability: 5

MSRP

\$30

URL

www.south-bend.com



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"IT'S A RIFLE BUILT ON AN AR PLATFORM BUT FIRES 7.62 X 39MM AMMUNITION AND ACCEPTS STANDARD AK-47 MAGAZINES. IT'S PRETTY MUCH THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS."



The year was 1993, and the summer sun was beating down on the black pavement with a vengeance. I had moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, and picked up a job in car sales. With the Speedway down the road, Charlotte was car country; it was gun country, as well. People loved their cars, and I loved making money off those people. I started pulling in money, hand over fist. It was the first job that provided me with lots of disposable income, rather than just making enough to get by, and I bought quite a few firearms that year.

I wet my feet in the 7.62x39mm world by buying my first SKS and a Maadi AK-47 that year and played around with them a bit. Maybe it was the snob in me or just the eccentricities

◀ Far left: Both the mid-level and top-end models in the Mutant line include a Magpul MOE stock.



◀ This fist-sized group consists of two boxes (40 rounds) of 7.62x39mm ammunition fired offhand from the CMMG Mk47 Mutant.

◀ The top-tier Mk47 Mutant comes with Geissele's SSA trigger that offers a phenomenally crisp and light pull at just 4.25 pounds.



◀ The CMMG Mk47 Mutant is an AR-platform rifle that accepts AK-style magazines and fires the 7.62x39mm round.

of these weapons that put me off, but I never really developed an affinity for those two rifle styles.

However, that's changed in the last several years as a result of quality offerings coming to the market now with various improvements, such as better trigger pulls, more rail options and so forth. Even so, I still hadn't jumped into the AK life again, but it was getting tempting.

Then, along came CMMG. The folks there decided to introduce a new product with a twist: the Mk47 Mutant. It's a rifle built on an AR platform but fires 7.62x39mm ammunition and accepts standard AK-47 magazines. It's pretty much the best of both worlds.

I recently received one for review. It was time to see if I could get back into the 7.62x39mm world again.

AN OVERVIEW

When I speak of "the best of both worlds," it's in terms of familiarity with operating controls on the AR-16, better

ergonomics, being easier to accessorize and, hopefully, better accuracy because of tighter tolerances in the build quality.

The advantages of the AK-47 mostly stem from the fact that it's the most widely sold and recognized military rifle in the world. It is the standard-bearer for simplicity and ultimate reliability. With those achievements comes a glut of surplus products that ultimately benefit the consumer.

First is the availability of a wide assortment of inexpensive 7.62x39mm ammunition from which to choose and test for the best performance out of a given rifle. Even today, the average consumer can go online and buy 1,000 rounds of quality 7.62x39 ammo for less than \$250. That's a steal in my opinion, especially for those of us with a penchant for storing up extra supplies.

Speaking of supplies, another great advantage of having an AK system are the copious amounts of magazines still on the market, especially the cheaper, surplus magazines. There are magazines in the U.S. market from all over the world, and you can choose from magazines in the \$6 to \$7 range (more on this later), or you can go for the very best (at least in old-world standards) and pay \$50 to \$100 for the top-end, new-production magazines such as the Circle 10 and Bakelite Soviet magazines.

Of course, Magpul makes its own AK magazines, which are in the \$16 to \$27 range, and the new Gen 3 series includes a steel-reinforced front spine and locking lug on the back spine of the magazine. These magazines have already drawn a big following because of their performance and price.

The last big advantage of the 7.62x39mm round over the standard 5.56x45mm (.223) round is the fact that it's in the .30-caliber range, is more of an intermediate combat round and delivers more energy than the 5.56 x 45mm alternative—and at longer distances, as well.

A CLOSER LOOK

CMMG spent a lot of energy making the fusion of the AK-47 and AR-15 work like a dream machine for shooting. The sample I received for review is the company's top-of-the-line Mutant model with the SV muzzle brake, a Magpul MOE stock, MOE pistol grip and Geissele SSA trigger.

After trying a couple of different rifles with the Geissele SSA trigger, I can promise that it's worth the extra money. The one installed in the MK47 Mutant for this review broke like a thin glass rod with no trigger creep, at just 4.25 pounds. That's an outstanding trigger for a combat weapon. (Of course, if you're feeling froggy, Geissele offers its SSA-E, which has a break point of just 3.5 pounds. Personally, I'd leave that to the target rifles.)

Instead of modifying a regular AR to work with the 7.62x39mm round, CMMG worked backward from its Mk3 platform (.30-caliber series), designing a midsized receiver, along

with a robust, midsized bolt that would stand up to the wear of 7.62x39mm ammunition. This was an excellent decision, because the Mk3 platform is designed to work with .308 ammunition, which has a good deal more pressure than the standard AK round. This provides a good safety buffer for standard 7.62x39mm loads.

The barrel of the sample MK47 Mutant is 16 inches long and incorporates CMMG's SV brake, as opposed to its standard A2 flash hider. It is a medium-taper barrel with a 1:10-inch twist. The total length of the rifle (stock collapsed) is 33.5 inches, and the weight (unloaded) is 7.2 pounds.

The receiver is built of 7075-T6 aluminum, and the rifle is equipped with the RKM15 Keymod handguard for attaching whatever accessories you'd like, but the open space has a rounded profile for user comfort. The MK47 Mutant is a direct-gas-impingement system, as are standard ARs; additionally, the rifle is shipped with one PMag AK magazine to help the user get started. When everything is combined with the Magpul furniture, the

user has a great host of features every bit as customizable as a standard AR rifle.

One slight difference, however, is the location of the magazine release. In order to work with AK-47 style magazines, a paddle release is located just forward of the trigger guard. It's wide enough for ambidextrous use and long enough to be pressed forward with a full magazine to release the empty one for a quicker

"CMMG SPENT A LOT OF ENERGY MAKING THE FUSION OF THE AK-47 AND AR-15 WORK LIKE A DREAM MACHINE FOR SHOOTING."



➤ The Vortex Optics SPARC II red-dot sight is an excellent choice for quick target acquisition with its 2 MOA red dot and parallax-free field of view.



➤ Some familiar features from AR rifles include the charging handle and dust cover, although there is no bolt hold-open mechanism that is the norm for AK-style rifles.



◀ The Vortex Optics Sparc II red-dot sight, mounted on the accessory riser, is a solid performer in the field. It has a 2 MOA circle, which translates to 1 inch at 50 yards and provides quick target acquisition.

reload. This, itself, is indicative of the amount of attention to detail CMMG paid when designing this hybrid rifle.

TIME TO GET SHOOTING

Of course, the fun part is always getting to the range and “having at it” by slinging lead at various targets. Not being an AK enthusiast, I was armed with the rifle as it was shipped, along with a good supply of Federal Premium’s 123-grain Power-Shok softpoint rounds—an excellent deer hunting round for dedicated AK fans.

I called a shooting buddy, and he was up for helping me give the MK47 Mutant a workout that day. But little did I realize that I wasn’t quite prepared for all eventualities. Sometimes, you just make certain assumptions and start kicking your own butt in the field when something doesn’t go according to plan.

Our arrival at the range was the first of multiple outings with the Mutant. When we got our gear out of the vehicles, we loaded up the Magpul magazine for the first time and went to town.

Well, we started toward “town.” The first

magazine was loaded with 20 rounds of the Power-Shok ammunition; at round number 12, there was a failure to feed. We shrugged it off as a break-in issue—until it jammed two rounds later ... and three rounds after that.

That's when my heart started pounding and my stomach churned a little bit. Still believing everything needed to be broken in, we tried another magazine—with pretty much the same results. Dang it! We weren't 15 minutes in, and we had an issue.

Even worse, I had no alternate magazines, because I don't have any AKs of my own. I know, I know. What self-respecting gun lover doesn't have a few AK mags laying around? (I sold mine back in the days right after the 1994 crime bill, when high-capacity magazines were getting scarce and commanded a higher price than usual.)

On the other hand, my shooting buddy is an AK freak. Even so, he didn't think of bringing any extra magazines with him. So, we made plans for a return trip to the range after I got a couple of other types of

ammunition. He would bring several different AK magazines. Then, we would sort out where the problem lay. Yes, hindsight is, indeed, 20/20.

The next time we got together, things went much differently. Before I left, I spent a little extra time making sure the rifle was properly lubed, and I had with me some common 7.62x39 ammunition that avid AK shooters tend to buy. When my friend pulled up and retrieved his gear, I saw that he had an assortment of AK

**"IT WILL OUTSHOOT
ALL BUT THE
MOST DEDICATED
SHOOTERS IN
THE FIELD."**





◀ An unusual feature on an AR-platform rifle is the paddle-style magazine release in front of the trigger guard. This makes it possible to use all styles of AK magazines and is easily activated by either the left or the right hand.

magazines, as well. I remember thinking that we were definitely going to figure out the issue.

SECOND TIME'S A CHARM

It didn't take us long to solve the problem. We shot the newly acquired ammunition through several different magazines, including metal surplus magazines from various countries, and there wasn't a single hiccup. Even though the MK47 was supplied with a Magpul AK magazine, my buddy also brought a new, in-the-package Magpul, and we also gave that one a try. There were no jams or failures of any kind with that particular magazine, either. We even shot a couple of magazines' worth of rounds from a \$5 Korean AK magazine, and the MK47 was still begging for more.

Just to satisfy my curiosity, we loaded up the original Magpul magazine we'd tried the first time, and after about the eighth round, the rifle jammed again. So, there it was. It wasn't an issue with the rifle, the ammunition or even lubrication. It was just simply a faulty magazine. Hey, it can happen.

I've never had a single issue with any of my own PMags, and although Magpul is known for its stellar quality, it makes millions of them, and an occasional lemon can pop out. This was just the exception that proved the rule. Case in point: The new PMag we tried ran just as flawlessly as all the other magazines. I was relieved, since that's a very easy fix. Chuck the faulty mag, and you're back in business; you're only out between \$13 and \$16.

We spent the rest of our range time obliterating targets and seeing what kind of accuracy we could squeeze from the MK47 Mutant while shooting offhand. We had to shoot this way, because everything was wet from snow and rain, including the table and chairs.

With just a 1X Vortex Sparc II red-dot sight while shooting off hand, we were able to hold fist-sized groups at combat ranges, even with rapid fire. (By the way, these weren't just five- or 10-round groups. One fist-sized group shot by my friend had 40 rounds through it, with the center actually cut out of it. Not bad for cheap ammunition and shooting rapid-fire off hand.)

THIRD TIME'S A LOCK

After our success on the second outing, I wanted to sit down at the bench on my third day at the range and give Federal Premium's 123-grain Power-Shok its due by testing it for accuracy

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CMMG Mk47 Mutant

- **BARREL LENGTH:** 16.1 inches
- **BARREL TAPER:** Medium taper
- **RATE OF TWIST:** 1:10
- **MUZZLE:** SV muzzle brake, threaded $\frac{5}{8}$ -24
- **HANDGUARD:** CMMG RKM15
- **GRIP:** Magpul MOE Pistol Grip
- **RECEIVERS:** Billet 7075-T6 AL
- **TRIGGER:** Geissele Automatics SSA
- **WEIGHT:** 7.2 pounds (unloaded)
- **LENGTH:** 33.5 inches (stock collapsed)
- **MSRP:** \$1,1849 (with V-brake, Geissele SSA and Magpul furniture)



➤ One nice feature on the Mk47 is the RKM15 handguard. The rounded profile allows for comfortable handling, while the Keymod slots allow for the attachment of different-length rails for the addition of accessories.

and function. After all, I wasn't about to blow through the Power-Shok with the other ammo we used on day two. It's a bit more expensive, at around \$1.15 per round (street price), but it's worth the price for taking down medium to large game such as whitetail deer. And before I had the sit-down with the Power-Shok, I made sure to pick up a new PMag magazine.

The twist to this exercise was that I was still using the 1x SPARC II red-dot sight with a 2 MOA red dot. For a rifle such as this, I would probably keep a red-dot sight on it, because I'm most interested in the defensive aspects of the MK47 Mutant. That being the case, there are times in a survival situation when a red-dot sight is the only thing available when you're pressed into hunting game.

The target I was shooting at, with a distance of 100 yards, had several bull's-eyes that were just 1.25 inches in diameter, so the red dot covered up the circle, as well as a good amount of white around the perimeter. That meant the red dot could still move around a bit and the bull's-eye would still be covered. And, although I had the rifle on a bench rest, it was still going to be tough to keep it in place without having a reference via a normal scope.

These weren't ideal conditions for testing the ultimate accuracy of a rifle or a particular load, but they did simulate a probable situation a prepper with just one rifle might have in the field when hunting for their supper. And that's what *American Survival Guide* is all about—versatility and improvisation.

I shot several three-round groups, and they ranged from a spread of about 3.75 inches down to about 2.85 inches, with an average group size of about 3.35 inches. At first blush, that doesn't sound fantastic. But keep in mind that there was no magnification in the optic, and the red-dot was oversized for the bull's-eye, so it depended on how well I could keep the rifle in the one spot on the sled. That's a lot of variance to deal with when testing at 100 yards—not to mention less-than-perfect eyesight.

Basically, with the setup I had on the Mutant, I had a minute-of-deer rifle, and I was greatly pleased by the accuracy I could pull out of it under those conditions. I guarantee that with a 9x or 10x hunting scope, sub-MOA groups can be achieved with this rifle and the right ammunition. Also, with the replacement magazine, there wasn't a single malfunction with the Federal Premium Power-Shok soft-point rounds.

THE WRAP-UP

No, the Mk47 Mutant isn't brand, spanking new to the market, but sometimes, it's nice to let the early adopters shake things out and see if any issues arise. In addition, the reason we did this review was not because the Mutant is new (although it's only been out a year or so) but because of what it offers to those of us with a preparedness mindset.

As a prepper or survivalist, our main objective is to store up enough supplies to help us make it through a crisis without breaking the bank. And while

**“THE
HYBRIDIZATION
OF THE TWO
POPULAR
PLATFORMS
OFFERS
COUNTLESS
SOLUTIONS
NEVER BEFORE
POSSIBLE.”**



◀ The review rifle the author received for review is the top-end model that includes CMMG's SV muzzle brake.

the Mk47 isn't as inexpensive as a lot of AK variants on the market, it does offer a lot of value because of the performance it brings to the table with the enhanced accuracy of 7.62x39mm rounds. It will outshoot all but the most dedicated shooters in the field.

Further, because of the glut of AR parts and accessories on the market, you can easily and cheaply accessorize and repair (if needed) the Mutant rather than go looking for custom and pricey, jury-rigged solutions to solve problems. The other side of the coin is that with all of the inexpensive 7.62x39mm ammunition and magazines on the market, you can stock up on reserve supplies two to three times faster than with other intermediate, battle-rifle rounds, and you can practice to improve your skills and techniques much more often.

I never thought I'd find an AK I liked, but that time finally arrived (sort of) with CMMG's Mk47 Mutant. The hybridization of the two popular platforms offers countless solutions never before possible. It offers fire controls most people love and appreciate while delivering the inexpensive and popular 7.62x39mm round that offers more terminal energy

downrange—particularly useful for taking larger game.

Is the Mutant the answer to the meaning of life? No. But, it is the solution to logistical issues that we, as preppers, encounter every day when trying to determine the best bang for our buck. Whether the buck is the dollar in your pocket or the one standing 75 yards away, the Mk47 Mutant's got your back! **ASG**

SOURCES

- CMMG INC.
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- FEDERAL PREMIUM AMMUNITION
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ADAPT & IMPROVE

CUSTOMIZE THE 870 TO YOUR
NEEDS AND STYLE

BY LARRY SCHWARTZ





To install the Wraptor Elite kit, you will need the forend, forend wrench that comes with the kit, a punch and a Phillips-head screwdriver.

Apump shotgun is one of the most versatile guns you can have in your survival arsenal. It is easy to use and simple to disassemble and assemble. Interchangeable barrels and different types of shells let you use it for a wide range of purposes, from home-defense to bird and small-game hunting to big-game hunting. In addition, its simple design makes it less prone to failure, which is always a plus in a survival tool. One way to take advantage of these characteristics is to tailor your shotgun's configuration and accessories so that they work well with how you want to use it.

One of the more innovative companies that make accessories for shotguns, especially pump shotguns, is Adaptive Tactical. Its product line addresses the commonly mentioned challenges brought up by shotgunners: getting the proper fit and how to mount accessories such as lights and sights. Three of this company's products, the EX Performance Forend, M4-Style Stock and the Wraptor Elite Forend, address these two issues.

ADJUSTABLE STOCK AND FOREND

To install the EX Performance kit, all you need is the adjustable stock and forend, forend wrench that comes with the kit, $\frac{7}{16}$ -inch socket and socket wrench, 10-inch socket extension, a punch and a Phillips-head screwdriver.

"BOTH THE EX PERFORMANCE AND THE WRAPTOR ELITE COMPONENTS ARE FULLY OWNER INSTALLABLE, WITH NO GUNSMITHING SKILLS REQUIRED."

If you want the flexibility of an adjustable stock on your shotgun, the EX Performance Forend and M4-Style Stock is a combination you should definitely look at. The forend is a bit wider than the factory-installed forend that comes with the 870, so it is easier to hold onto when cycling the action. It also makes it easier to manipulate with gloves on. It features a 2-inch Picatinny rail at the front end that is hidden under a protective cap held in place by an Allen screw. This is a perfect location for the laser sight or weapons light you might want to add to your 870.

› If your plans are to add more than one rail-mounted accessory to your shotgun, the Wraptor Elite Forend is the forend you should use instead of the forend that comes with the EX stock.

EX Performance Forend & M4-Style Stock Features

- › SIX-POSITION, ADJUSTABLE STOCK WITH EASY-TO-REACH ADJUSTMENT LEVER TO ADJUST LENGTH OF PULL
- › INTEGRATED QUICK-DETACH SLING SWIVEL ATTACHMENT
- › NONSLIP, VENTED, RUBBER RECOIL-REDUCING PAD ON STOCK, PISTOL GRIP AND FOREND WITH RIBBED GRIP AREA
- › 2-INCH PICATINNY RAIL CONCEALED UNDER A REMOVABLE NOSE CAP ON THE FRONT OF THE FOREND FOR LIGHTS AND LASER ATTACHMENT
- › AVAILABLE IN BLACK, "STON" PREMIER, "STON" SLATE, ATACS, MULTICAM, DESERT DIGITAL AND KRYPTEK HIGHLANDER
- › HIGH-IMPACT POLYMER CONSTRUCTION
- › OWNER INSTALLABLE
- › MSRP: \$119.99

Wraptor Elite Forend Features

- › ERGONOMIC DESIGN AND GRIP
- › PATENTED SIGHT TUNNEL ALONG TOP OF BARREL, INTEGRATED HEAT SHIELD
- › TWO 1.75-INCH PICATINNY RAILS—ONE ON EACH SIDE OF THE FOREND
- › 6-INCH PICATINNY RAIL ALONG THE TOP OF THE FOREND

Combining The EX Performance stock with either the EX Performance Forend or Wraptor Elite Forend gives the user flexibility to adapt their 870 to a number of needs and uses.

- › AVAILABLE IN BLACK ONLY; HIGH-IMPACT POLYMER CONSTRUCTION
- › OWNER INSTALLABLE
- › MSRP: \$49.99

The stock has even more features. Starting at the back end, it has a perforated rubber recoil pad that cushions the recoil well and is less tacky than the one installed by the factory. As a result, it doesn't snag on clothing as much when you mount the gun.

Moving forward, there is a quick-detach sling swivel attachment to accommodate a two- or three-point sling. The stock adjusts to one of six possible lengths, so you or anyone in your group can adjust it to the specific length of pull needed. The final feature is a pistol grip that makes the shotgun easier to hold and manipulate with one hand.

The EX Performance stock and forend are offered in six colors or camo patterns. This allows you to match the camo on your shotgun or use the different color or pattern to break up the appearance of your 870 to help with concealment.

IF YOU NEED MORE RAIL SPACE

For those who don't want or need an adjustable stock or who need over 2 inches of rail space on the bottom of the forend, Adaptive Tactical also makes the Wraptor Elite Forend, which is designed specifically for use on the Remington 870 and Mossberg 500, 88 and 590 pump shotguns.

It features a comfortable, ambidextrous grip for easy cycling of the pump action. Three Picatinny rails—one 1.75-inch-long rail on each side and one 6-inch-long rail along the top—provide plenty of real estate for any number of accessories such as sights, lights, lasers or combination devices.

These three rails are located on the outside of a patented sighting tunnel that sits atop the barrel. This design places them where sighting devices are normally found, rather than below the barrel, where many multi-rail designs place them. The sighting tunnel



also allows you to continue to use any sights mounted on the barrel and to help you keep your head in proper alignment with the barrel.

While Adaptive Tactical only offers the Wraptor as a stand-alone product in black, you can get it in the same color options as the EX Performance stock as part of the company's Venom product offering. The Venom combines the M4-style Stock and pistol grip, the Wraptor forend and the ability to load from a 10-shell box or drum magazine.

STRAIGHTFORWARD, EASY INSTALLATION

The EX Performance and the Wraptor Elite components are both fully owner installable, with no gunsmithing skills required. They come with their own forend wrenches, so the only tools the owner needs are a socket wrench with extender and socket (for the stock installation), a Phillips-head screwdriver and a punch. In addition to the forend wrench, the packaging includes the few parts needed to do the installation, as well as written instructions. The instructions are also

INSTALL TOOLS

EX Performance Forend & M4-Style Stock

- › FOREND WRENCH (INCLUDED WITH THE PRODUCT)
- › SOCKET WRENCH
- › 7/16-INCH SOCKET
- › 10-INCH SOCKET WRENCH EXTENSION
- › PUNCH
- › MEDIUM PHILLIPS-HEAD SCREWDRIVER

Wraptor Forend

- › FOREND WRENCH (INCLUDED WITH THE PRODUCT)
- › PUNCH
- › MEDIUM PHILLIPS-HEAD SCREWDRIVER



available on the company's website (www.adaptivetactical.com) for each product.

Installation is a simple process of removing the stock, barrel and forend assemblies and replacing them with the new components.

To install the EX Performance forend and M4-Style stock, first remove the factory stock. Once this is done, install the adjustable M4-style stock (if that is all you wanted to do). If you also want to install the forend with its Picatinny rail, also remove the trigger assembly before putting on the adjustable stock. Removing the trigger assembly makes it much easier to remove the bolt and bolt carrier later on with the forend installation.

To install the new forend, remove the trigger assembly, as mentioned above. Then unscrew the magazine end cap, which will allow you to slide off the barrel. The next step is to remove the action bar assembly, which includes the forend and action bars that move the bolt and bolt carrier when loading another shell.

To remove the action bar assembly, disengage the action bar release tabs, located just inside the receiver. Once they are disengaged, you will be able to pull

the action bar assembly out of the receiver. You are now ready to remove the forend.

Use the included forend wrench to remove the forend nut that holds the forend onto the magazine tube. After removing the forend nut, slide off the forend. This will also remove the bolt and bolt carrier from the receiver. Now, mount the new forend.

Slide the new forend onto the tube that the original forend was on; align it with the action bars. Next, screw the forend nut back onto the action bar assembly to secure the new forend in place. Put the shotgun back together by reversing the steps you took to disassemble it. (Note: The steps to install the EX Performance forend and the Wraptor Elite forend are the same.)



The written instructions that come with both products provide detailed information about how to do the disassembly and assembly for both Remington and Mossberg pump shotguns, so experience in taking the shotgun apart is not required. If you haven't taken your shotgun apart before, there are many self-help videos on YouTube that explain how to do it.

IDEAL ITEMS FOR REAL-WORLD SCENARIOS

So, if you are looking for some solid accessories to help customize your pump shotgun, take a look at one or more of the items in the Adaptive Tactical product line. These products address the needs of most shotgunners when they start using their guns in real-world scenarios. They are easily installed without a gunsmith, and they do it all at a reasonable price point.

My favorite items are Adaptive Tactical's Venom products, because they combine the best features of a number of the company's products in one package. **ASG**

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DRILL, BABY, DRILL

THREE DRILLS TO IMPROVE DEFENSIVE SHOOTING SKILLS

BY PAUL RACKLEY

With everything that has been happening around the world in regard to terrorist attacks, mass shootings and stabbings, it seems as if the reasons to carry a concealed handgun just keep increasing.

Of course, most of the attacks occur on soft targets, where defenders are required to disarm, leaving themselves with limited tools to use against the many evil people in the world. However, there is an excellent chance that someone is carrying a handgun in every location in the country where it is legal. Because there are more locations in most states where carrying concealed is legal, the majority of Americans are protected by law-abiding "sheep dogs" in malls and other gathering places—whether they realize it or not.

Of course, carrying a concealed handgun at all times and actually knowing how to use it

are quite different. Whether required by law or not, all concealed-carry advocates should obtain at least some training—perhaps an NRA First Steps class at the very least, although more-advanced training would be advisable. Beyond that, though, folks who carry a handgun for self-defense need to practice on a fairly regular basis to keep learned skills fresh, as well as to obtain new skills that could be useful in dire circumstances.

In fact, training should be practically continuous and everlasting. There is no such thing as "enough," and skills can never be too polished. Unfortunately, many shooters believe that an occasional trip to the range for some accuracy and draw training is enough to protect them on the streets. That might be true in many cases, but why take that chance, when there are numerous drills that can be inserted into a training regimen to add realism and be better prepared for a situation in the real world?

FAILURE DRILL

Also known as the "Mozambique drill," the failure drill is designed to stop a threat when the standard double-tap isn't enough. A double-tap is no longer standard procedure; now, it's shoot until the threat is stopped. (However, this drill still develops shooter proficiency.)

Colonel Jeff Cooper developed the drill after meeting Mike Rousseau and hearing about a time when Rousseau used a Browning Hi-Power to stop an enemy soldier during the Mozambican War of Independence. During the fight, Rousseau fired two rounds into the body of an assailant armed with an AK-47. However, the attacker continued to advance, so Rousseau took careful aim and placed a round in the head and put the man down.

Cooper realized this drill would be extremely useful, because it simulates an attacker who is determined, drug-addled or possibly wearing body armor. The reason for the head shot doesn't really matter; if an attacker hasn't stopped after having two rounds placed in the torso, Cooper's thought was that a fight-stopping head shot should be administered.

To perform the failure drill, set a silhouette

target at 7 yards (21 feet), and from either a low-ready or retention position, fire two fast shots into the center mass of the target. Then, assess the situation, determine if the attacker is still advancing, and fire a carefully placed shot at the head. Variations can be added by including movement or by firing from cover or from the ground. The possibilities are only limited by the imagination and the potential ways a shooter might need to fire.

MALFUNCTION DRILLS

One of the most dangerous situations is facing a deadly threat with a gun that has malfunctioned, mainly because there is no time-out during a gunfight. Regardless of whether it's an empty chamber, stovepipe or double-feed, a handgun malfunction at a critical time is more than just a problem; it can get a person killed.

Preventing malfunctions is the main reason shooters should perform proper maintenance on firearms, especially on carry guns. A handgun that is carried daily should be well broken-in so it can handle all types of ammunition. It should be cleaned and lubricated periodically and after every shooting session; it should also be inspected regularly to ensure that no foreign objects have worked into the mechanisms during carry.

Magazines should also be checked and rotated to maintain spring pressure, because faulty magazines are one of the leading causes of semiauto handgun malfunctions.

Of course, regardless of care and maintenance, malfunctions can happen, which is why shooters should regularly perform malfunction drills, both at the range and at home using dummy ammunition.

Drill #1: The first action that should be performed if a semiauto ever fails to fire is the "tap & rack," because it will fix most malfunctions. It consists of a hard "tap" on the bottom of the magazine, along with a hard "rack" of the slide. This procedure returns a gun back to the ready condition for type I (unseated magazine) and type II (failure to eject) malfunctions.

Drill #2: The second drill clears type III malfunctions, also known as "double feeds." If the tap & rack action doesn't work, drop the magazine and cycle the slide at least two times. Then, reinsert the magazine and rack the slide. If these two procedures fail to bring the gun back into working condition, it is either jammed or actually broken and will require tools for proper repair.

Drill #3: The last drill requires a partner, who creates a malfunction and hands the gun to the shooter without revealing the type of malfunction. The shooter takes the gun, aims at a target and pulls the trigger. When the gun fails to fire, the shooter must assess the situation, clear the firearm and finish the scenario with two rounds in center mass on the target.

Variations include loading only one round to force a reload or inserting dummy ammunition into the magazine. The only constant is that the shooter should not know the condition of the gun during the situation, forcing him or her to determine the problem and clear the gun under pressure.



Exercise is one of the best ways to increase breathing and heart rate during firearm training. It also helps shooters get in shape for real situations.

"... TRAINING SHOULD BE PRACTICALLY CONTINUOUS AND EVERLASTING. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS 'ENOUGH,' AND SKILLS CAN NEVER BE TOO POLISHED."

PRESSURE DRILLS

The hardest factor to train for in a self-defense situation is pressure. During a life-and-death struggle, a person's heart and breathing rates rise, and fine motor skills break down. This is why firearm instructors stress gross motor skills during training, as well as repetition, to ensure that crucial skills are ingrained in the muscle memory. A person must be able to perform actions when the body is in flight-or-fight mode.

Advanced training schools, such as Gunsite or Shootrite, have methods to introduce pressure into training. Unfortunately, not everyone has the time or money to pursue advanced training from such sources. However, heart rate and adrenaline can be raised by other methods, such as exercise or timing.

To conduct a pressure drill, shooters should perform push-ups, sit-ups, side-straddle hops or sprint a set distance and back to increase heart rate and breathing before each shooting scenario. Shooters can also include a stopwatch to compete against a partner or try to beat their own times to increase the pressure.

Another way is to set up targets with distances between shooting stations. A three-stage scenario works well, with targets set up 40 yards apart. Start at position one, draw and fire two rounds before sprinting to position two to fire again; then, on to position three and back to the beginning.

Variations can be implemented by adding magazine changes, setting up barriers for shooting from cover and rotating station numbers. Use a stopwatch to produce competitive results against friends to show progress.

Firearm skills are finite and need to be constantly renewed. Drills help maintain muscle memory but must be performed regularly—or those skills will not be there when they are truly needed to save a life. **ASG**

1 When a semiauto fails to fire, the first thing a shooter should do is give the magazine a hard tap to ensure it is seated properly.



2 After tapping the magazine to make sure it is seated, a shooter should then rack the slide to clear a caught casing and load a fresh round.



3 A double feed requires a little more than a "tap & rack" procedure.



4 To clear a double feed, a shooter must rip the magazine from the handgun but should hang onto it for reloading the gun.



GEAR GUIDE



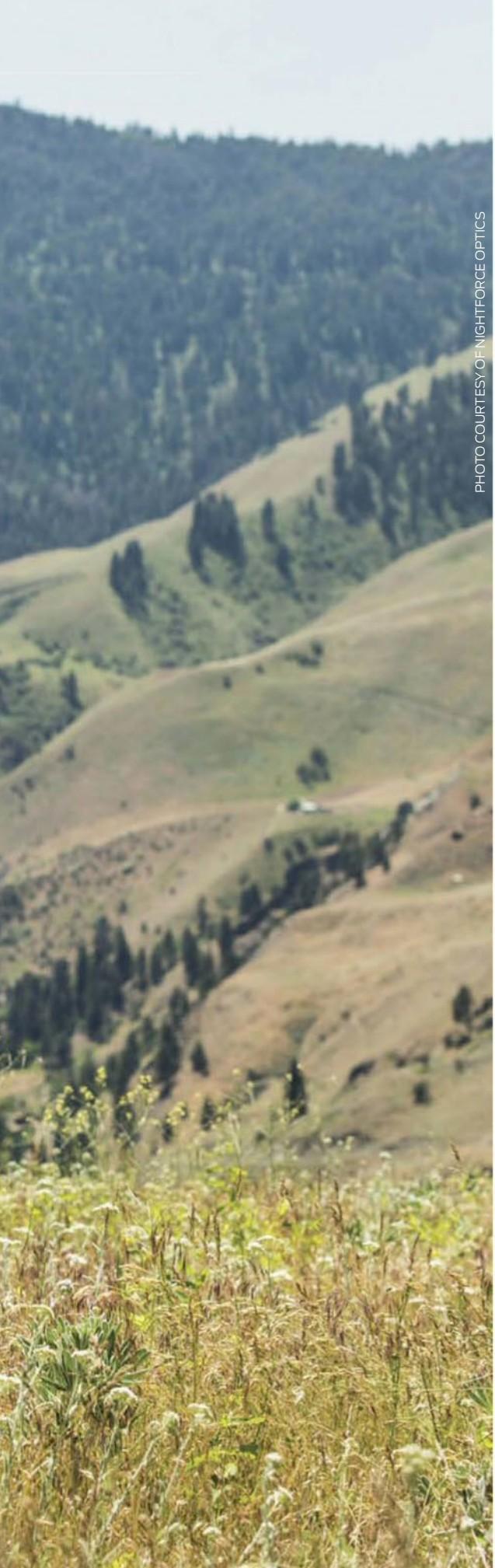


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2016 SHOT SHOW

AN ANNUAL WONDERLAND FOR THE ADVENTURER IN EVERYONE

BY MICHAEL D'ANGONA

Every year, thousands of people travel to Las Vegas, Nevada, to attend the annual SHOT Show. This multi-day event draws a wide cross-section of individuals from all around the United States and many international locations. Fishermen, hunters, preppers, military and self-defense instructors, survivalists and more indulge in a plethora of new and innovative equipment, weapons, clothing and techniques offered to complement their particular fields of interest, as well as their everyday professions.

Hundreds of new and attention-grabbing items are displayed and demonstrated. Advances in technology are increasingly apparent in weaponry and accessories, as well as survival gear and numerous

life-saving personal devices.

Whether you are a tech-savvy survivalist who enlists the aid of only the most modern devices or an old-school primitive skill practitioner, there is always something featured at the show that suits everyone's unique needs.

The fascinating products displayed within this guide and throughout the show as a whole are great steppingstones if you are up to trying new things. Whether you require more personal self-defense or survival products, the latest in scopes, pistols or rifles for your hunting excursions, or the newest in all-weather clothing and gear, this guide can lead you down the right path. These items, newly released onto the market, can only add to your chances of accomplishing your goal, whatever it might be. **ASG**

GEAR

GUIDE

1

SPR Optics Mount

A rifle mount's inferior quality can let you down when you least expect it.

The SPR Optics Mount is built tough and is designed to handle the heavy recoil of modern sporting rifles. Its T6 aluminum construction and anodized finish will last for years of hardcore shooting. The mount can accommodate scopes with 1-inch or 30mm tubes and features a notched crossbolt for a positive lock on Picatinny rails—a key but underestimated component for successful shooting.

Features

- 6063-T6 aluminum construction
- Fits 1-inch and 30mm tubes
- Anodized hard-coat finish
- Cantilever design ensures proper eye relief
- Perfect height for modern rifles

MSRP

\$90.45

URL

www.weaveroptics.com

2

Centerfire CCI Big 4 Shotshells

Trouble with invasive and unrelenting pests? Take them out quickly and efficiently with the new CCI Big 4 handgun loads.

These new shotshells by Centerfire offer extended range and greater energy delivered when you need it most. Designed to fit most popular calibers and packed in reusable boxes of 10, these shotshells are perfect for long-range targeting with superior precision. Available in 9mm, .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum and .45 Colt calibers.

Features

- Packed in reusable boxes
- Available in many popular calibers
- Delivers more energy than conventional shells
- Long-range capabilities
- Great for pest problems

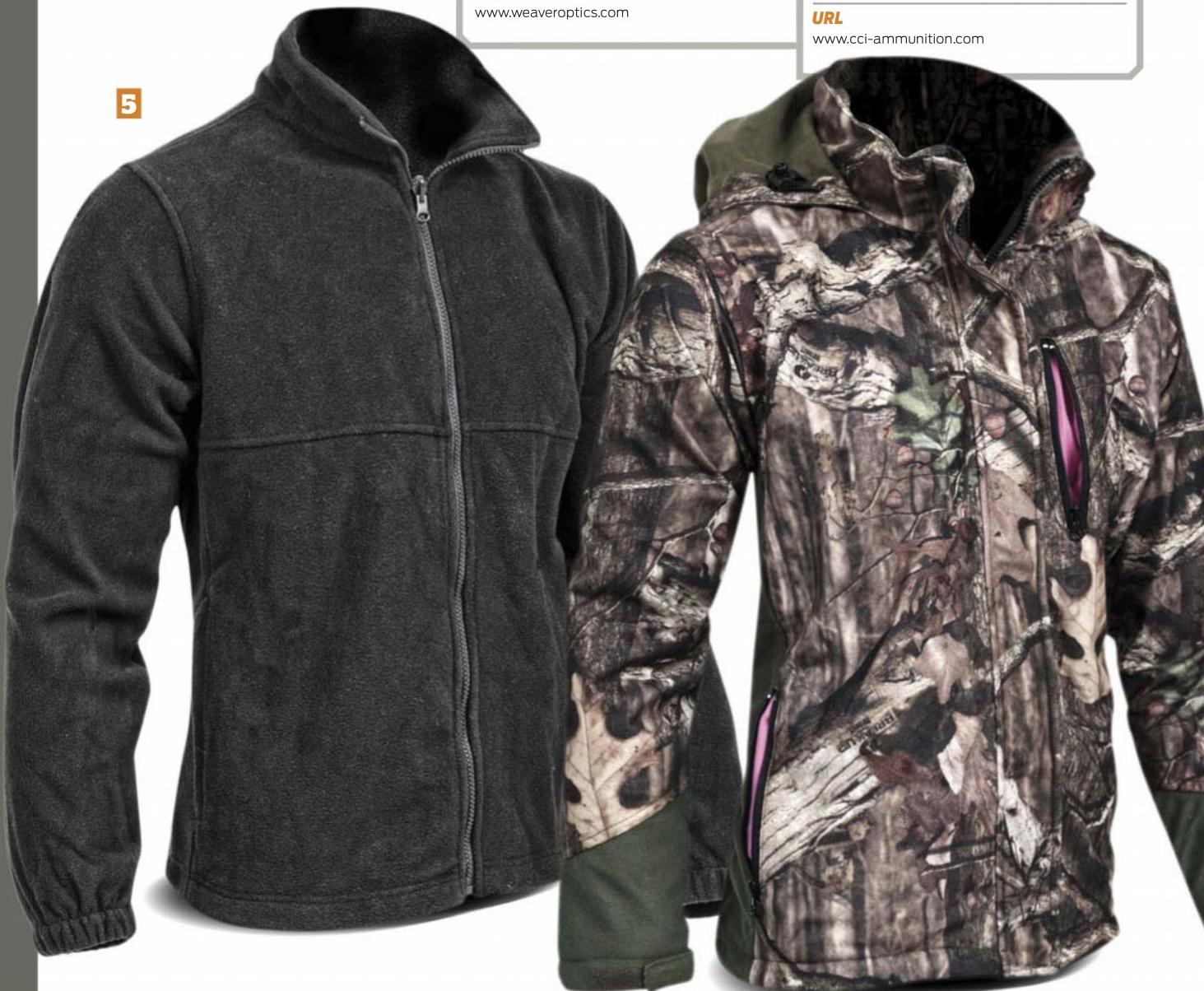
MSRP

From \$17.95

URL

www.cci-ammunition.com

5



3

Walther Arms PPS M2 9mm

Carrying a conceal weapon just got easier with the new Walther slim PPS M2. This "engineered-to-be-concealed" pistol stays close to you with easy concealability while not sacrificing comfort or accuracy. It measures only 1 inch wide, has a low profile and offers a new push-button-style magazine release for easy operation. The smooth, 6.1-pound trigger pull helps to improve control and shot accuracy. Walther's legendary signature ergonomics ensure you maintain a firm and steady grip on the weapon at all times. The PPS M2 is also available in an LE edition with phosphoric sights.

Features

- Designed for concealed carry
- Push-button magazine release
- LE edition available
- Only 1 inch wide
- Low-profile body

MSRP

\$469

URL

www.waltherarms.com

4

Kimber Micro 9

All-metal construction is *de rigueur* for the new Kimber Micro 9. Adorned with a two-tone finish, and with an overall reduced size and easy concealability, this firearm makes a great addition to your personal-protection arsenal. Sporting rosewood grips, the Micro 9 delivers each round in style. Small-scale 1911 ergonomics and fire controls make this an appealing choice for concealed carry. It is a powerful and compact defense package for both men and women.

Features

- Caliber: 9mm caliber
- Weight: 15.6 ounces (empty magazine)
- Barrel length: 3.15 inches
- Magazine capacity: six
- Two-tone finish
- Rosewood grips

MSRP

\$654

URL

www.kimberamerica.com

5

Yukon Gear Women's 3-in-1 Insulated Parka

You get the best of both worlds with Yukon Gear's Women's 3-in-1 Insulated Parka. Its multi-layer system combines a waterproof, breathable outer jacket with warm fleece inside to give you the ultimate in protection and comfort when trekking through nature's backyard.

The parka is made of durable and "quiet" fabric for when stealth is a necessity, and its intricate camo pattern allows you to blend in with your surrounding environment. Varying weather conditions allow you to wear each section separately. They zip back together easily when needed.

Features

- 100 percent polyester tricot and fleece liner
- Sizes S–XL
- Multifunction parka system
- Waterproof and breathable
- Lightweight, durable fabric
- Zip-in heavyweight inner jacket
- Windproof outer jacket

MSRP

\$117

URL

www.yukongearhunt.com



GEAR

GUIDE

6

Hoppe's Gun Medic

A dirty and grimy firearm is a problem waiting to happen. A build up of gunpowder and other substances can cause your firearm to malfunction and fail when you need it most.

Luckily, Hoppe's Gun Medic can get you back into the action within seconds. This state-of-the-art product will clean and lubricate your firearm simultaneously. Its unique formula utilizes the same technology used in jet-propulsion engines.

Just a few sprays will "resuscitate" your firearm, ensuring more accurate and dependable shooting. This product is a must-have staple for your range bag.

MSRP

\$7.95

URL

www.hoppes.com

7

Victory Gear QH Holster

The QH is a perfect holster for both beginning and experienced shooters. Its unique design will accommodate multiple firearms of varying sizes, reducing the need to buy multiple holsters. Its funnel shape allows for easy draw; it re-holsters smoothly.

The exterior Kydex shell is tough enough to withstand most knocks and falls, while the leather backing provides all-day comfort. The retention adjusts easily to fit everyone's specific firearm and carry needs. The QH is a simple, quality holster that does the job.

Features

- Equipped with standard 1.5-inch clips
- No-stick draw
- Open-ended shell for varying lengths
- Leather backing for comfort
- Unique funnel design for easy draw
- Right-side carry only

MSRP

\$48

URL

www.comp-tac.com

8



7



**FIND
MORE
FREE
MAGAZINES**

HTTP://SOEK.IN

8

Teslin Hybrid Midlayer

This versatile garment makes a great stand-alone jacket or a perfect insulating midlayer when colder weather hits. It's extremely lightweight, with infused insulation fabric within the chest section, while its stretch sleeves offer a snug "fit to the skin" feeling.

The jacket features peached pongee fabric that makes your movements virtually silent—a must during hunting trips or when capturing game. Multiple zippered pockets hold your small essential gear, and an integrated zipper guard protects your face from the cold.

Features

- Synthetic, lightweight insulation
- Two zippered side pockets
- Quiet fabric, ideal for hunting
- Zipper guard to protect face
- Soft tricot collar lining for comfort
- Available in SG blades, bottomland and midnight/snow patterns.
- Sizes: Medium–3XL

MSRP

\$59.99

URL

www.yukongearhunt.com

9

Streamlight TLR-6 Universal Laser/Light Combo

The Streamlight TLR-6 offers versatility and precision laser and light projection for your sub-compact pistol. It delivers 100 lumens of white light to a distance of nearly 89 feet, while its red laser targeting beam allows for pinpoint accuracy during a home invasion or other personal defense situation.

This accessory is designed to fit 18 different models, including Glock, KAHR, SIG Sauer and more. Three lighting modes are available: LED only, LED/laser, and laser only. The unit attaches quickly and easily to the pistol's trigger guard and is ready for action almost immediately. Automatic shutoff, wide operating temperatures and a durable housing round out this exceptional accessory.

Features

- Uses C4 LED technology
- Laser/light combination
- Water resistant
- Durable, impact-resistant casing
- Integrated battery door
- Automatic battery shutdown

MSRP

\$210

URL

www.streamlight.com

10

Monarch 7 Long Range Riflescope

The "long shot" won't be a problem for hunters anymore with the Monarch 7 riflescope. This new line of scopes is designed for long-range targeting using advanced optical technology. Its numerous features include large objective lenses, which provide a bright image and edge-to-edge clarity; variable brightness settings that are perfect for all levels of lighting conditions; and illumination features that offer automatic shutdown and convenient push-button activation. Eyepiece and objective lens caps, sunshade, and additional windage and elevation turrets come standard in this amazing scope package.

Features

- 30mm main body tube
- Automatic battery shutdown feature
- Integrated battery cap opener
- Fully multicoated lenses
- Extra-large, 56mm objective lens

MSRP

Starts at \$849.95

URL

www.nikonsportoptics.com



GEAR GUIDE

11

Heavy-Duty Instructor's Belt

When you need heavy duty, the Galco Instructor Belt delivers. This extremely durable belt is perfect for security or law enforcement personnel who constantly carry heavy gear on a daily basis. This belt is constructed of supertough SCUBA webbing that keeps it rigid and sturdy, even with hardcore use. The drop-forged, parachute-spec buckle is finished with Rogard by Robar, while an epoxy finish prevents the belt from fraying. True Velcro closures provide added security. The belt is available in black or flat dark earth color in both 1½- and 1¾-inch widths.

MSRP

\$59.95

URL

www.galcogunleather.com

12

Elite Survival Mission Pack

The quality of your bug-out supplies is crucial during any survival situation—but don't overlook the bag they are packed in.

The Elite Survival Mission Pack offers you one of the most durable and versatile packs on the market today. The pack is constructed of heavy-duty 1000 denier nylon with YKK zippers; shaped backpack straps with adjustable sternum strap; and a vented, padded back panel that provides comfort when you are on the move.

It features numerous fully accessible compartments useful for organizing all your goods. A hydration sleeve and tube routing allow you "on-the-spot" water access when thirst strikes. The pack's integrated paracord handle contains 8 feet of usable emergency cordage. Don't forget this valuable pack on your next adventure.

Features

- 2,600 cubic inches total volume
- MOLLE attachment points
- Included rain cover
- Comfortable design
- Multiple carry handles

MSRP

\$179.95

URL

www.elitesurvival.com

12



15



13

Krink-Equipped Mk47

The new Krink-equipped Mk47 model with its muzzle-brake design serves as a booster, blast reducer and flash suppressor and helps to slightly reduce the recoil of the weapon. The modified Mk47 features either an 8- or 13-inch barrel with a 9- or 15-inch RKM KeyMod handguard. Both sport a Magpul CTR buttstock and Magpul MOE pistol grips. Each model is designed to accept existing AK magazines and drums. The Krink Mk47 will make a great addition to your arsenal.

Features

- Krink muzzle device, thread 5/8-24
- Magpul MOE pistol grip
- 6.8 pounds and 7.4 pounds (unloaded)
- 26- or 32-inch length (collapsed stock)
- 8.0-inch 1:10 medium-taper 4140 SBN barrel

MSRP

Starts at \$1,649.95

URL

www.cmmginc.com

14

Nightforce Focal Plane SHV

Superb quality at an affordable and competitive price is what the new SHV Riflescope brings to the table. This scope features "intelligent" reticles with illumination. The unit turns off to conserve battery power and then instantly restores your pre-selected setting when turned back on, thereby preventing time-wasting cycling. The SHV scope is competitively priced and offers an exposed elevation turret that aids the user with a positive return to their zero point, no matter how many adjustments were made. A removable windage adjustment cap allows versatility when needed. This scope is a great addition to every hunter's accessory stock.

Features

- Side-parallax adjustment
- Windage/elevation adjustments
- High quality and affordability
- 11 brightness settings
- Elevation turret with Nightforce Zerosept

MSRP

\$1,290

URL

www.nightforceoptics.com

15

SOCOM 16 CQB Rifle

Compact and sleek, the SOCOM is your go-to weapon for offensive and defensive close-quarters applications. Because of its reduced muzzle length and adjustable buttstock, you will be able to maneuver in tight spaces and not have to sacrifice essential stopping power. This dynamic weapon offers an innovative pistol grip that is especially designed to allow interoperability with a vast array of aftermarket options. The SOCOM offers great flexibility for added gear, including two included three-slot rail segments and two longer, seven-slot rails for a bipod addition or for mounting a scope if long-range shots are needed. Choose from 5-, 10- or 20-round magazines (one 10-round magazine is included).

Features

- Caliber: .308
- Compact design
- Adjustable buttstock
- Extreme customization
- Perfect for home-defense
- Ballistic softshell case included

MSRP

\$2,099

URL

www.springfield-armory.com



13

14

GEAR

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16

Trophy XTreme Binocular

This binocular is built tough—plain and simple! Don't be afraid to take these deep into Mother Nature's backyard. Their durable exterior protects and encases twin large objective lenses, ensuring constant clarity and brightness. Its waterproof and fog-proof design virtually eliminates possible damage while hunting or bird watching in harsh environments. High magnification lenses bring everything into clear view. Its ergonomic design ensures a firm grip for easy handling, and its improved, three-step eyecups allow for more precise fit and comfort.

Features

- Fully multicoated lenses
- Heavy-duty construction
- Large, center focusing knob
- Exterior rubber armor
- Lifetime warranty

MSRP

\$199.99

URL

www.bushnell.com

17

SOG Scout 24L Pack

Take your survival pack to the next level with the SOG Scout. This heavy-duty pack is designed for ultimate comfort, durability and easy accessibility to all its multiple compartments. It features a large main cavity, padded laptop sleeve, hydration carry and external compression straps useful for hauling large, oversized items.

The pack's suspension system allows a fully loaded pack to be carried for hours without fatigue or painful discomfort setting in. Internal smaller pockets keep loose items organized, and its unique Quad-zip allows you to reach gear at the bottom without unpacking from the top. Don't settle for inferior packs when your survival may be on the line.

Features

- Padded straps and hip belt
- Built-in hydration sleeve
- Impact-resistant top pocket
- Heavy-duty nylon material
- Laser-cut Hypalon MOLLE panels
- Large zipper pulls

MSRP

\$189.99

URL

www.sogknives.com

17



19



20



18

Glock 19 MOS Pistol

Glock's universally known, simple handgun design now sports a new addition: a modular optic system perfect for offensive and defensive tactics.

The Gen19 is available now with milled slides designed for attaching multiple optical systems without costly customization. This 9mm pistol is ready to go, "out of the box," for civilian concealed carry, as well as law enforcement personnel and other security-type professions. Professional trainers recommend optics to enable faster target acquisition, because lost seconds can make the difference in a life-or-death encounter. The pistol features all the traits you love about the compact Glock 19—now, with an extra "bonus."

Features

- Polymer-based pistol
- For everyday carry or law enforcement
- Milled sides for optical attachments
- Simple, safe design
- Trusted brand for 30 years

MSRP

\$569.99

URL<https://us.glock.com>**19**

Savage Mk 42 Takedown Shotgun/Rifle Combo

This unique takedown shotgun/rifle combination adds yet another option for preppers, survivalists or anyone wanting a compact and versatile weapon.

With a simple push of a button, the firearm breaks down into two, easily storable parts. It's designed to fire rimfire rounds from the top barrel and .410 bore shotgun shells from the bottom. The durable synthetic stock is fully weatherproof, while its matte-black barrels reduce distracting glare. An included "go-bag" features MOLLE loops for attaching extra equipment, a carrying strap and numerous pockets for storing ammo and other small gear.

Features

- Simple break-action design
- Durable synthetic stock
- Matte-black metalwork
- One-button breakdown operation
- Removable, adjustable rifle sights

MSRP

\$500

URLwww.savagearms.com**20**

Nightforce Spotting Scope

Never miss a thing with the new TS-80-Degree Hi-Def Spotting Scope. This hunter's "must-have" item offers an ergonomically designed body created from nearly indestructible magnesium alloy. Bump it, bang it, drag it through the toughest reaches of the wild, and it holds tough. It's fully waterproof and shock tested to stand up to whatever nature throws at it. The unit operates effectively in low-light situations and utilizes an internal roof prism design that reduces eye fatigue while viewing for long periods of time.

Two turns of the focus ring, and your image is crisp, clean and in view. The scope fits easily into a standard 1/4-inch tripod and includes a heavy-duty sleeve and rugged carry case for extra protection.

Features

- Fully waterproof
- 40- to 60-degree field of view
- Magnesium alloy body
- 20-60X magnification
- Included protective lens caps
- Focuses 20 feet to infinity

MSRP

\$1,595

URLwww.nightforceoptics.com

GEAR GUIDE

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21



21

SOG SlimJim

SOG's new SlimJim knife is extremely thin and quite durable. Its minimalist construction makes it the thinnest assisted-opening knife available, while it constantly maintains extreme durability under heavy wear and tear. The knife opens quickly with either hand using its integrated double-sided thumb studs. It features dual built-in safety locks useful for when the blade is either open or closed. A reversible, low-carry pocket clip ensures that this valuable survival item remains close to you at all times. The SlimJim is a perfect addition to any supply kit or personal protection gear.

Features

- Clip-point blade
- 420 stainless steel
- Overall length: 7.4 inches
- Weight: 2.4 ounces
- Reversible pocket clip
- Lifetime warranty

MSRP

\$90

URL

www.sogknives.com

22

Streamlight Super Siege Lantern

You can't get much accomplished in total darkness. Luckily, the Streamlight Super Siege rechargeable lantern can turn that around. This essential survival item produces a brilliant 1,100 lumens of light, enabling you to keep active, even when the sun sets. It features one white and four red C4 LEDs with six output modes. Use it as a worklight, scene light, SOS signaler and more. The unit also functions as an auxiliary USB power source, so you can keep your cell phones and other electronics charged throughout your adventure.

A useful color-changing light indicator eliminates guesswork about your battery's charge. The unit is impact resistant to 2 meters, floats in water and offers a convenient, watertight "secret" compartment for any small, valuable items.

Features

- Multiple functions and light color options
- Charges personal electronic devices
- Color-changing battery indicator
- Floats when fully assembled
- Includes watertight compartment
- Lifetime warranty

MSRP

\$200

URL

www.streamlight.com

25



23



23

Camillus Rage 7.25-Inch Folding Knife

Camillus has offered unparalleled craftsmanship for more than 140 years.

Economical and tough as nails, the company's Camillus Rage folding knife is a must-have for fishermen, hunters, survivalists or the "everyday man." This blade accomplishes whatever tasks need to be done. Its nonstick carbonitride titanium blade makes short work of nearly any material.

The knife, when folded, fits well in your front pocket and opens quickly with a flick of your thumb. The glass-filled nylon handles offer a firm and steady grip as you effortlessly make your cuts.

Features

- Carbonitride titanium nonstick blade
- 440 stainless steel
- Glass-filled nylon handle
- 3-inch blade
- Lifetime warranty

MSRP

\$21.99

URL

www.camillusknives.com

24

MTM Ammo Cans

Store, secure or transport your magazines in the best way possible by using MTM Ammo Cans. These heavy-duty cases protect your precious ammo and magazines because they use ridged foam padding, allowing each mag to be stored in an upright position.

No more scratches, bumping or sliding as you carry this durable case from site to site. A watertight seal keeps damaging moisture out, and its superior latching system allows for two padlocks to secure your goods from others. Each ammo can is designed for easy stackability, which saves valuable space. These cans are available in dark or earth color.

Features

- Water-resistant O-ring seal
- Heavy-duty latching system
- Ridged foam padding
- Comfortable and strong handles
- Double padlock tabbed
- Molded-in stacking ridges

MSRP

Starts at \$24.99

URL

www.mtmcase-gard.com

25

Mossberg 500 ATI Scorpion Shotgun

The 500 pump-action is legendary for its smooth, reliable operation; and now, with the addition of ATI tactical accessories, it takes a step up to the next level.

Its durable receiver is constructed of lightweight, anodized aluminum that offers durability and better balance. The six-position, adjustable stock is designed to fit almost any user.

Keep your weapon safe from accidents with Mossberg's universally recognized, ambidextrous top-mounted safety.

Features

- Smooth, reliable operation
- Six-position adjustable stock
- Anti-jam elevator
- Ambidextrous top-mounted safety
- Dual-sided QD attachment points
- Anodized aluminum saddle

MSRP

\$644

URL

www.mossberg.com

**24**





ALERT & ALIVE

**SITUATIONAL AWARENESS AS PART
OF EVERYDAY LIFE**

BY DAVE WILLIAMS, GUNNERY SERGEANT, USMC (RET.)

In recent months, we have seen an escalation in violence around the world—not the type of violence we traditionally expect, such as out-of-control regimes and dictatorships. This is a new type of violence: terror-inspiring attacks on our way of life. Suicide bombers, active shooters, mass murders and rioters have left us all feeling vulnerable and confused.

The escalation of these attacks has systematically stripped away our civil liberties. They are also paving the way for police actions, raids and increasing regulations on just about everything in the name of public safety. As a society, we have a duty to our republic to remain vigilant and aware so we keep ourselves safe and preserve our liberties.

I don't want to simply regurgitate the normal EDC drivel or try to tell you how to become Jason Bourne. I want to focus on a few things that the average person with little or no special training can do to keep themselves and their loved ones safe; a few things you can do, regardless of your station in life or available resources.

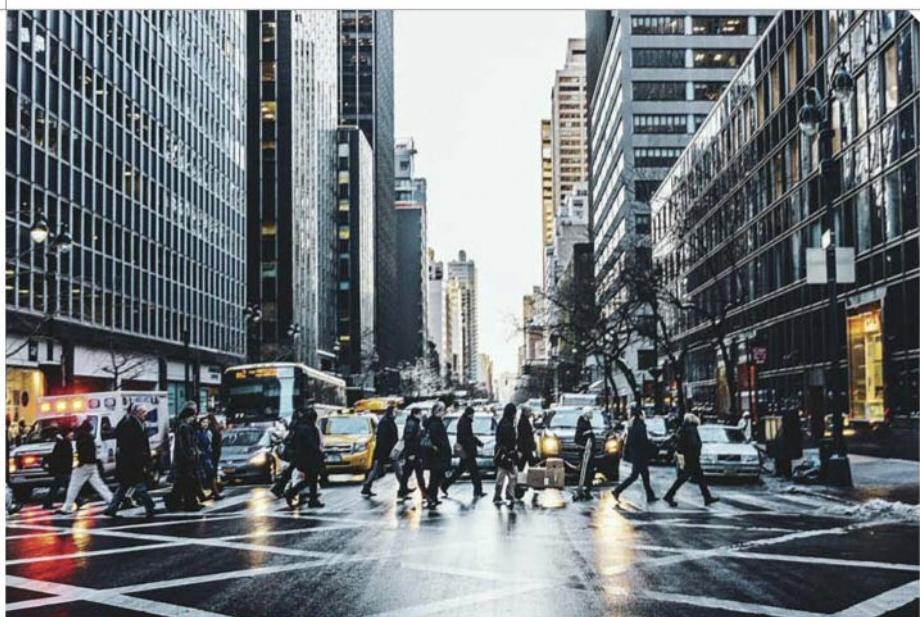
In order to accomplish this, I will explain a few habits that have allowed many others (and me) to come home from multiple combat and peacekeeping operations around the world.

AWARENESS: A MACRO TO MICRO DISCIPLINE

Anyone who has served in a combat zone knows that events in one part of a country impact that entire region. These events either inspire more or deter them—but they will always have an effect. Often, there is a large-scale, polarizing topic of national debate that inspires random acts of violence on the local level. The informed citizen knows what those topics are and how they are affecting the immediate area.

The national media is in the business of inspiring debate; it takes no responsibility for the unrest that its interpretation inspires. Understanding this is key to understanding the issues. National media outlets are very polarized, so get your news from a variety of sources and stay fully informed, regardless of your political polarity.

Your local areas and regions most certainly have their own issues, as well. Sometimes, they are purely local; other times, they are fueled by the national debate. In either case, it is most important to understand both sides of the argument. Quite often, simply being aware of these



↳ Terrorism and violence are plagues that keep normal, law-abiding citizens as hostages unless we can take action to mitigate our risk.

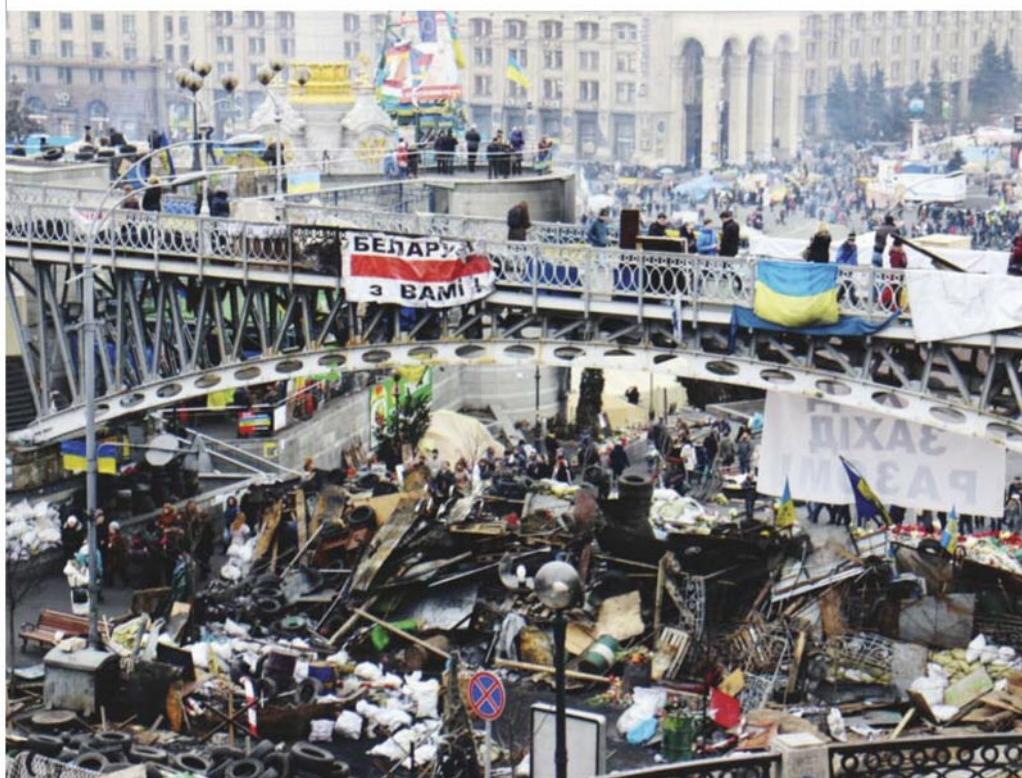
↳ Large crowds are especially vulnerable to manipulation. A charismatic or passionate speaker can turn an otherwise peaceful protest into a violent, rioting mob.

issues will help you avoid a potentially dangerous situation. Only then can you avoid the locations that are likely to become violent as a result of the passion that surrounds the issue at large.

AVOID EMOTIONAL CONFUSION

A very common tactic among conmen is to put their "mark" on a quick emotional ride that sets the stage for the con. If you find that you surge through emotions in rapid succession, break contact. In addition to the lowly conman, this is also the same tactic that public speakers, advertisers and politicians use.

This same mental sleight of hand is exactly how one person can incite a volatile crowd to start conducting violent acts. Once the kettle boils over, it is



"OFTEN, THERE IS A LARGE-SCALE, POLARIZING TOPIC OF NATIONAL DEBATE THAT INSPIRES RANDOM ACTS OF VIOLENCE ON SOME LEVEL."

hard to contain. Learn to recognize this as it happens, and when you see this sort of thing taking shape, it is time to leave the area.

Watch old news footage of some of the recent demonstrations that turned violent. If you watch the footage of the event at ground zero, it will all start to make sense. This is not by chance; many of these events are set ablaze by people who understand exactly how this process works. Police and military personnel are trained to recognize this and stay emotionally neutral in such events. This does not mean that peacekeepers cannot get sucked into the violence of an event; it simply means they are more prepared to remain in control of themselves.

A large crowd of otherwise mentally stable individuals can quickly become a stampeding herd in this type of a situation. It is important to understand that it does not take a psychology professor to incite a riot. Any fool who is passionate can turn sane, intelligent people into animals. This is even more likely to happen if the herd already agrees with the agitator from the onset about a politically charged issue.

MAINTAIN SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

If you are not personally aware of what is going on around you, you cannot react quickly enough to keep yourself safe. We have all seen the fool walking the aisles of a store while their attention is fully taken up with their smartphone. If this is you, stop it! This person has effectively turned off any and all awareness of their surroundings.

When out in public, keep your phone in your pocket and your eyes up. Know what is going on around you at all times. Now, I don't mean you should scurry around the store like a frightened squirrel and avoid all human contact. Simply look up and pay attention to your surroundings, and look people in the eye when you pass them. You will find that most of them will not even be looking back at you. Do so in a relaxed and calm manner. If you look frantic and paranoid, you are likely to be profiled by law enforcement or at least other aware individuals as someone who is acting suspiciously.

PROFILE PEOPLE AND TRUST YOUR INSTINCT

Oh, no! He said the "p" word! That's right—"profiling" has become a politically charged word, but it is not a bad thing in itself. Like it or not, we all do it without even thinking. Have you ever been waiting to check out of the local box store and decided to jump in a slightly longer line because the checker looked younger, faster and less talkative? I know I have ... and that is profiling.

Profiling is necessary for a variety of reasons and is very often used by police and military in all aspects of their duties. It is also the main tool professional peacekeepers use to maintain their own safety while in the line of duty.

You probably already avoid contact with certain groups or individuals based on their behavior, mannerisms or just because of your instinct. This is a safety mechanism we are born with, and it is refined through our own life experiences. It is not bad—and you are not bad for behaving in this manner.

Have you ever felt an uneasy feeling and ignored it, only to have something bad happen? Trust your instinct, and never question it. It has kept many warriors alive to fight another day.

I was once on patrol in Afghanistan; there were no indicators or any disturbance

◀ Military, police and first responders are often "inoculated" against high-stress situations through training scenarios. This training helps them keep their wits and perform under pressure better than the average bystander. But no amount of training can completely eliminate the potential to fall into an emotional trap.



› Profiling has gained a bad reputation, but we do it every day to avoid danger and navigate through our lives. If it looks, quacks and walks like a duck, it is probably a duck.



in the trail. I had a bad feeling rush over me, and I stopped and changed direction immediately. Only hours later, a tractor went through the exact same spot, and an IED exploded overhead from a tree. Trust your instinct.

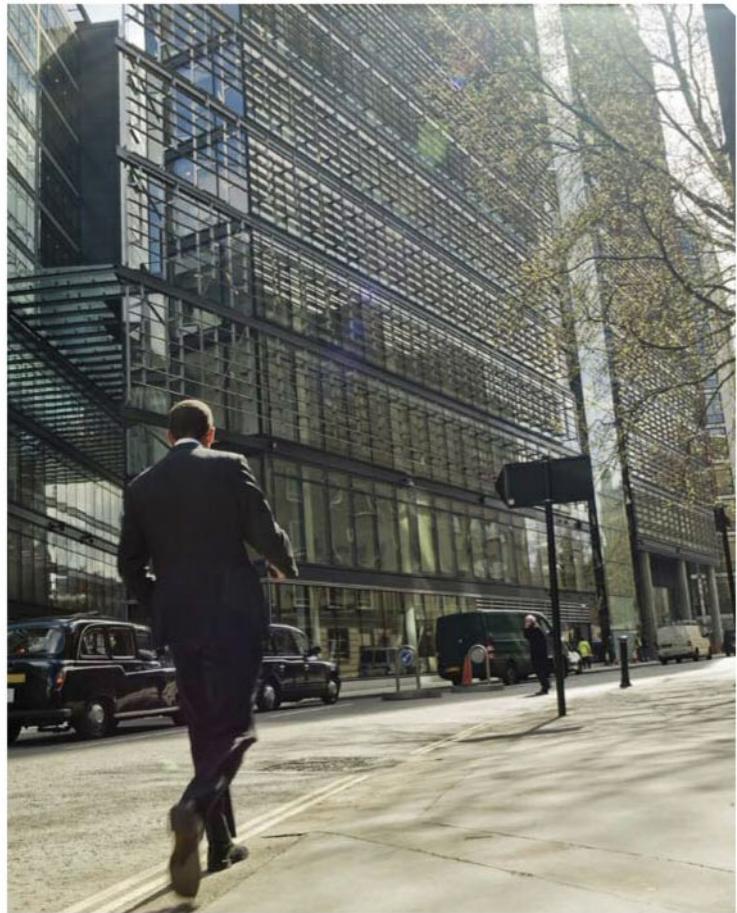
EXPLOIT COMMUNICATION ASSETS

The mere mention of ham radio often conjures up images of the paranoid weirdo with the tinfoil hat. This could not be farther from the truth. A decent handheld, dual-band UHF/VHF radio can be purchased for around \$30. It can be programmed to monitor all the local emergency, police and fire dispatch channels. Additionally, these radios can monitor FRS, MURS, GMRS, railroad frequencies and even retail outlets.

I keep one at home and one in the car, all the time monitoring my surroundings. Although I have my ham license and know how to communicate, I rarely do. I find much more value in listening to what is going on around my immediate location so I can avoid trouble when necessary.

I have even picked up communications regarding events such as bomb threats or civil disruptions in locations I was bound for. In many of these situations, the general

› Being aware of your surroundings will keep you from walking directly into trouble that could possibly have been avoided.





➤ Paranoia is just as bad as denial. Stay informed, steer clear of trouble, and enjoy all that life has to offer—without becoming a victim or a statistic.

public has no idea what is going on or that there is even an event unfolding. The powers that be limit the information, because they do not want to start a panic. This leaves the unaware citizen in a potentially dangerous situation with no information to act on.

I was recently alerted to a bomb threat in my local big-box store. The patrons of the store were not allowed to leave and were told that due to a television theft, the building was surrounded by police. In fact, most of the employees were not aware of the real threat and were told the same TV story by the management. In an event such as this, you might not be able to convince them to let you out, but you would have information that could help you take action to stay safe.

This happened only two hours after I had left that exact location. I later learned via social media that multiple similar threats were made on the same day at different locations. This could have been the patterning attempts of terrorists to gauge the reaction by local emergency responders.

If you have a smart phone, there is an abundance of free apps that allow you to monitor a lot of those same frequencies right from your phone. I find this very useful when there is some major event on the news.

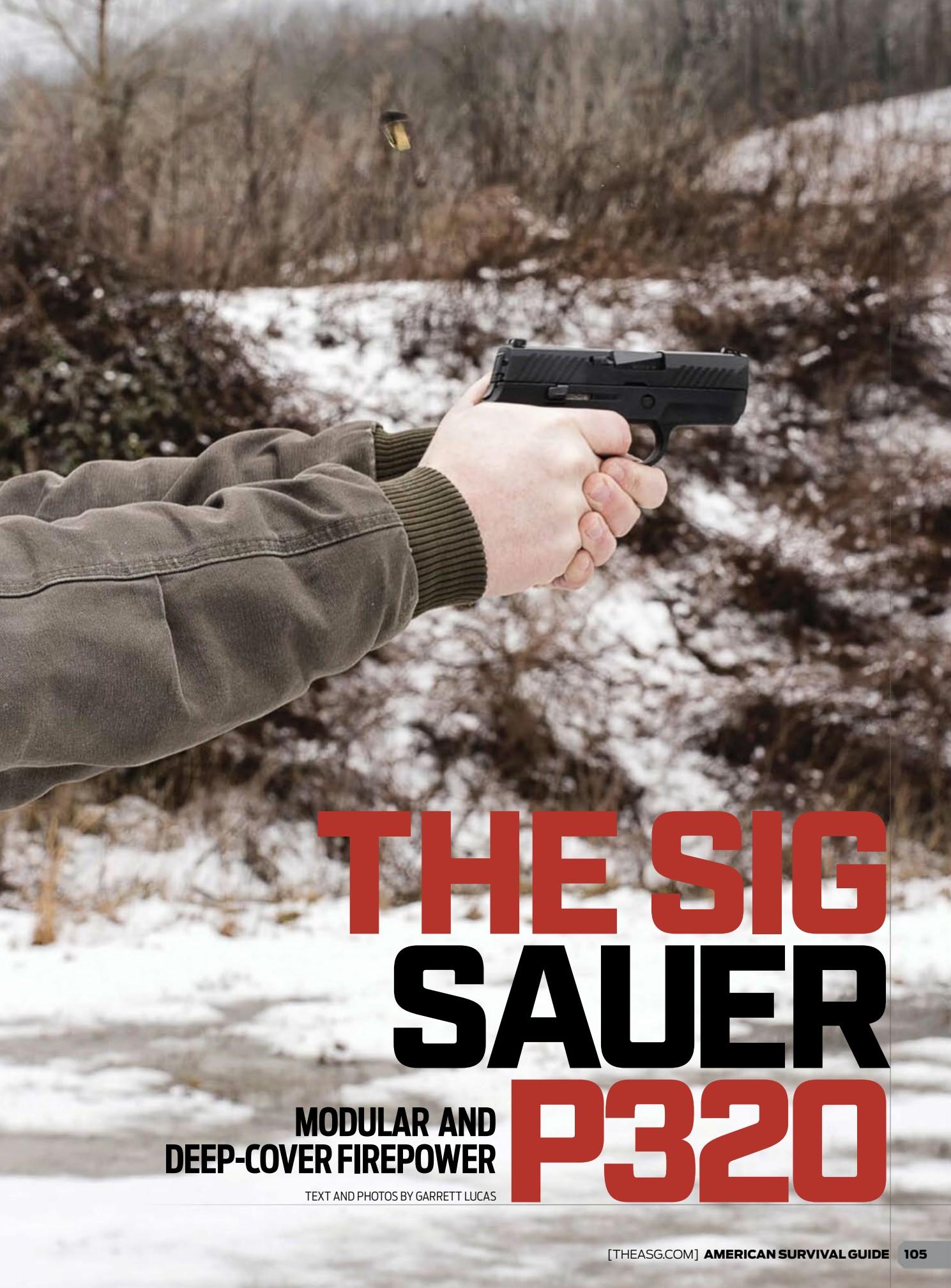
For instance, if there is an active shooter in Chicago, I can search the app for the channel in that area with the most active listeners. It is an eye-opener to listen to the police and emergency responders communicate; at the same time, I can observe how much the situation is exploited by the news. The truth is that sometimes, it is downright comical how much an event is dramatized on the news.

It is no small investment to increase your personal situational awareness. It can sometimes be very physically and mentally taxing. But the rewards for this effort are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—without the overwhelming paranoia that accompanies ignorance and misinformation.

In order to increase situational awareness, you must choose to act on that information. It does no good to know what is going on around you if you are not willing or able to take appropriate action. Otherwise, ignorance is bliss! **ASG**

An advertisement for a growth hormone patch. The top half features a woman in a red bikini standing in a dynamic, colorful, swirling background. The bottom half features a muscular man flexing his abdominal muscles. The text is overlaid on the image.





THE SIG SAUER P320

MODULAR AND
DEEP-COVER FIREPOWER

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY GARRETT LUCAS

It seems like yesterday when I picked up the new, full-sized SIG Sauer P320 in 9mm to add to my collection. There were a couple of things about it that appealed to me. First, for whatever reason, I liked its looks, and I liked that it had a 4.7-inch barrel for the extra ballistics bump—however slight. It also didn't hurt that it had a pretty sweet trigger pull, as well.

But I was really intrigued by the modular design that was incorporated around the new chassis. The concept was that you could extract the small, serialized, internal stainless frame that was the "firearm" and swap it between different-sized slides, polymer grip modules and barrels to configure a different gun.

As a result, the user could use the same fire control inside a full-sized pistol and then switch it out for use in a subcompact system or to convert it to a different caliber. Because there was only one "firearm" in the mix, you could buy all the different slides, barrels and frames you wanted without having to go through an FFL dealer.

Just recently, SIG Sauer introduced its new subcompact P320. I wanted to try it out to see how it handled and get a feel for whether investing in the subcompact conversion package would be a good investment for me; I could then switch out the firing mechanism from my full-sized package to the smaller one. After requesting a P320 subcompact in 9mm, it didn't take long for it to hit my dealer's doorstep.

"I WAS MORE THAN SATISFIED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SUBCOMPACT P320."



◀ The Sig P320 in all its glory—including its sleek, assertive profile and ergonomic touches to maximize its concealability while still being able to deliver a payload of 12+1 rounds



◀ The subcompact P320, despite its name, is a hand-filling pistol that is easy to conceal. It has enough firepower to defend against more than just one adversary.



◀ Like its bigger brothers, the subcompact P320 version has the more tactical front cocking serrations. However, the subcompact forgoes the squared trigger guard and accessory rail in order to obtain optimum concealability.

“SIG SAUER DOESN’T DISAPPOINT WITH THE TRIGGER PULL. THERE’S NO STACKING OR FEELING OF RESISTANCE AS YOU COMPLETE THE PULL; IT’S ONE SMOOTH PROCESS.”



► The model the author received for review came with two flush-fitting, 12-round magazines.

ENTER THE SUBCOMPACT P320, STAGE LEFT

Because I'd already unboxed a P320 series before, there weren't any huge surprises waiting for me. The subcompact version had the same assertive look and nice styling; it was just smaller. The only two real differences were the lack of a rail on the subcompact and the rounded trigger guard for ease of concealment. The other three sizes have squared-off trigger guards. For a firearm that's meant for deep concealment, I think changing these two features was actually the right choice.

Like its bigger siblings, the P320 subcompact has a nicely stippled texture on both the front and back straps, along with the sides of the grip. It's nowhere near aggressive enough to irritate the hand while shooting, but it provides an excellent gripping surface to ensure a secure purchase on what SIG Sauer calls the Polymer Grip Module.

Of course, the specifications are different than for my own full-sized model. The subcompact has a 3.6-inch barrel, an overall length of 6.7 inches and an overall height of 4.7 inches. In comparison, the full-sized version has a 4.7-inch barrel, a total length of 8 inches and a height of 5.5 inches. Additionally, the subcompact comes with two 12-round magazines, as opposed to the 17-round magazines of the full-sized version.

Other similarities between the two packages include a stainless-steel slide with a Nitron finish, and both are available in either standard contrast sights or SIGLITE night sights. Also, the subcompact utilizes the same styling characteristics in the design of the takedown lever, magazine release and the slide release. There are no sharp edges at these points. The parts look almost sculpted, with radiused corners, and this treatment makes engaging each mechanism easy and smooth.

As with the other sizes, the slide on the subcompact P320 has cocking serrations on the front, as well as on the back. This seems to be a trend with standard models from different makers, especially for "tactical" pistols. To each his own.

For me, front cocking serrations make the occasional pistol look a little better, but I wouldn't use them. I want my hand nowhere near the end of the barrel when cocking a pistol or press-checking to see if a round is in the changer. Call me silly.

AT THE RANGE

The subcompact P320 went with me to the range on several occasions. I had a nice supply of Federal Premium's 124-grain 9mm American Eagle ammunition on hand, and I wanted to



From this vantage point, we can get a feel for how the controls, such as the slide release and takedown lever, are sculpted into a more ergonomic and comfortable fit for the user.



The subcompact P320 comes from the factory with its own holster. As a result, you can start your carry training as soon as you open the box.

"... THE SUBCOMPACT UTILIZES THE SAME STYLING CHARACTERISTICS IN THE DESIGN OF THE TAKEDOWN LEVER, MAGAZINE RELEASE AND THE SLIDE RELEASE."

as you complete the pull; it's one smooth process. After five measurements with the trigger scale, the average pull weight I came up with was almost 6.2 pounds—just a hair above the 6.1-pound pull in the specifications. That can be attributed to where the scale's "finger" is placed on the trigger, itself.

I think SIG hit just the right balance for a trigger pull on a striker-fired pistol. I have played with my share of striker-fired pistols, and the P320 doesn't have the lightest pull of them all. However, I've run across one or two that were on the verge of "scary," because the trigger pull was so light. When working with a pistol that doesn't have a manual safety (although the P320 offers a tabbed trigger), I'd prefer that the trigger pull be just a bit heavier, just to be on the safe side. Even so, I'm not looking for an 8- to 12-pound trigger pull either. Yes, I'm picky that way.

The P320 subcompact model shot extremely well, even with the less-expensive practice ammunition. Shooting offhand at 15 yards, it was easy to keep the group sizes under 3 inches. When shooting from the bench, the best 25-yard group was just a hair over 2 inches with Federal's 124-grain HST ammunition.

For a pistol with such a short sight radius and aggravated by an aging shooter's eyes, I was more than satisfied with the performance of the subcompact P320. I wouldn't shoot that well offhand when the adrenaline hits, but the inherent accuracy is already there. It's up the shooter to exploit its potential.

In contrast to the full-sized model, there was definitely a bit more muzzle flip, but the pistol was still easy to control and quickly get back on target. The handling felt good while putting down the paper bad guys, and despite its subcompact classification, it was easy to manipulate and switch out magazines during the shooting process. Sometimes, subcompacts can get lost in the hand, making it more difficult to do these things smoothly.

SOME TAKEAWAYS

As an owner of a full-sized 9mm P320, I will honestly state that there could be some unconscious bias on my part, although I try to stay objective when it comes to things like this. But because the design and mechanics of the subcompact are essentially the

SPECIFICATIONS

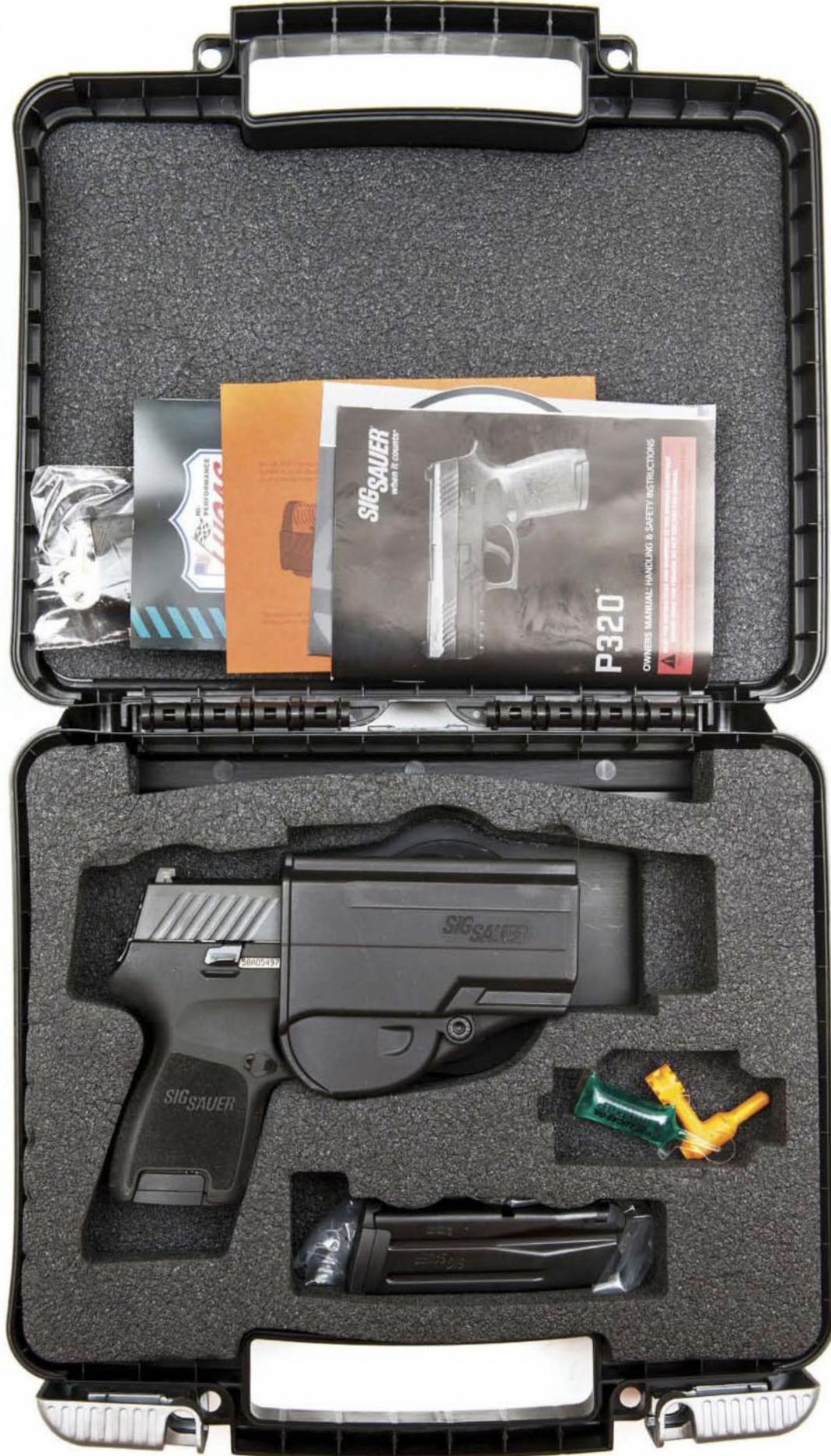
SIG Sauer P320 Subcompact Specifications

- **AVAILABLE IN:** 9mm, .357 SIG, 40 S&W
- **OVERALL LENGTH:** 6.7 inches
- **OVERALL HEIGHT:** 4.7 inches
- **BARREL LENGTH:** 3.6 inches
- **WEIGHT:** 25 ounces (with magazine)
- **CAPACITY:** 12 (9mm); 10 (.357 and .40)
- **trigger PULL:** 6.1 pounds
- **MSRP:** \$628; \$713 with SIGLITE night sights

put the pistol through its paces and compare the shooting experience with the full-sized model I brought along.

From the beginning, I liked the subcompact model as much as I like the full-sized version. SIG Sauer doesn't disappoint with the trigger pull. There's no stacking or feeling of resistance

The P320 subcompact is delivered in a well-appointed carrying case that includes gear and needed paperwork for the firearm—not to mention the always-present safety lock.



same—and I already liked the one I own—I don't think it's a complete surprise when I say I truly enjoyed handling and shooting the smaller version.

Along with the trigger pull, the subcompact model is accurate, very controllable and houses 12 rounds in the magazine. That's nothing to sneeze at when it relates to a pistol approaching subcompact parameters. I say, "approaching," with all due consideration. While I liked the pistol quite a bit and can't find anything at all to fault with it, I don't know that it falls under my definition of a true subcompact, particularly with the SIG-like high-bore axis.

When compared to the Full-Size, Carry and Compact models in the P320 line, sure, relatively speaking, it's a subcompact. But don't get confused by the label. It's big enough for a cold-weather coat pocket, but don't expect it to slip into a jeans pocket. On the other hand, it will be an excellent concealed-carry piece with the right IWB holster—even under a T-shirt.



◀ This chassis (or fire control mechanism) is actually considered the firearm and is the only piece that needs a serial number and must be sold through an FFL dealer. This piece can be moved around to different slides, barrels and grip modules to change the overall size and capacity or to change calibers.

◀ Pictured here is a close-up of the subcompact against the user's hand for scale. Note that it has a relatively high bore axis, similar to its cousins in the SIG Sauer family of pistols.



◀ The SIG P320 is an easy firearm to take down. There's no need to grasp the slide and hold it in the right place over the pin. Simply bring the slide fully to the rear, lock it in place with the slide release, rotate the takedown lever, and pull off the slide. To change grip modules, simply pull out the takedown pin completely; then, lift out the stainless-steel chassis.

The P320 series of pistols offers a lot of excellent characteristics with each individual model, but it also offers a lot as a family of arms. The modular design not only allows the operator to use the same registered chassis to change the overall size of the package, but that same chassis can also be used with caliber-conversion kits ranging from 9mm up to .45 ACP.

No matter what size pistol you're looking for or what caliber, the SIG Sauer P320 series has all the bases covered. From my experience, the subcompact shoots as well as the full-sized version, and I would bet the same would also be true of the other models.

You can start where you want, but in this day and time—and as a first choice for a buyer—I'd go with the subcompact, which can be used both at home and on your person via concealed carry. From there, you can build what you want. The sky's the limit! **ASG**

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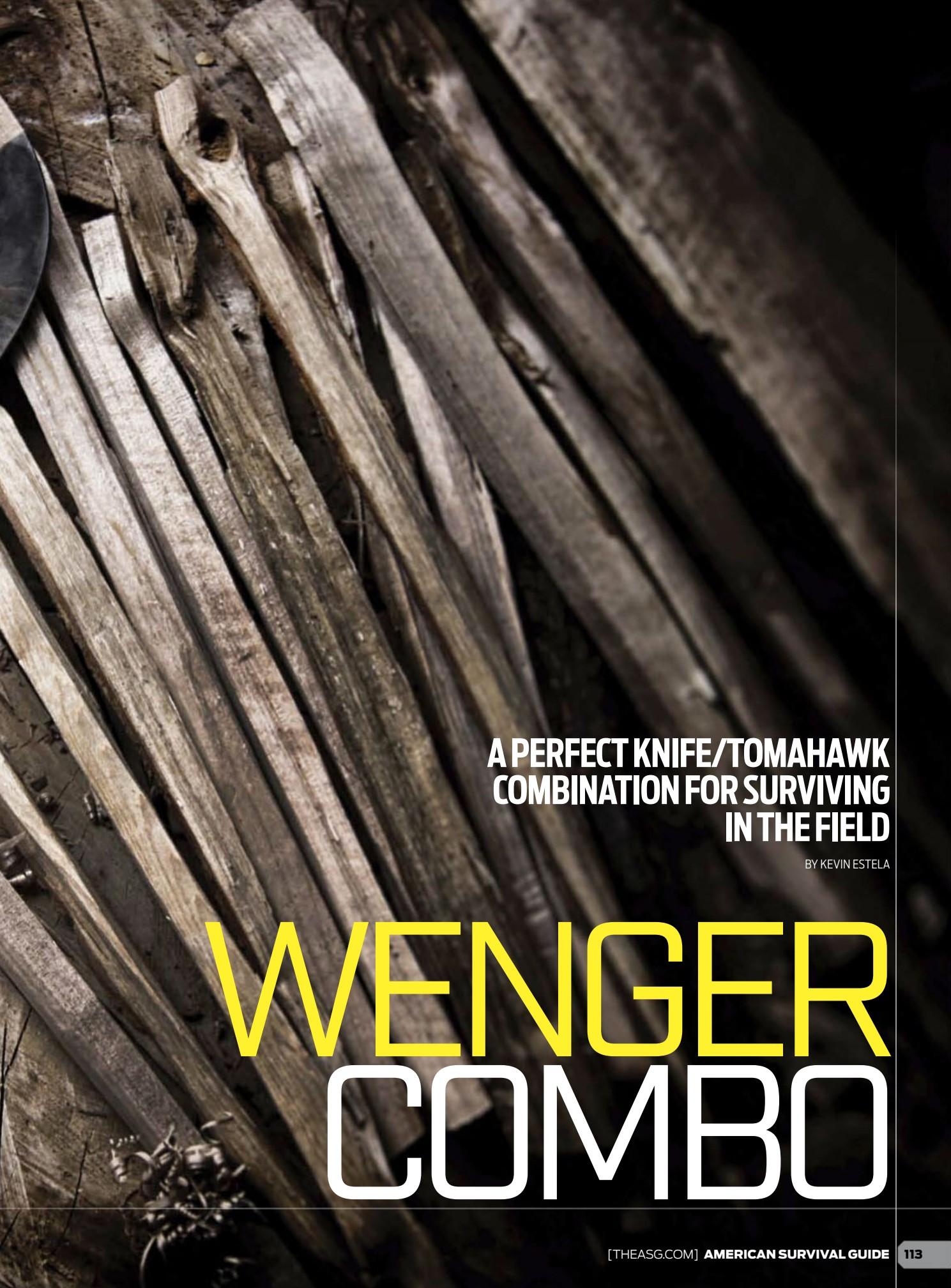
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A PERFECT KNIFE/TOMAHAWK
COMBINATION FOR SURVIVING
IN THE FIELD

BY KEVIN ESTELA

WENGER COMBO

Knife or tomahawk? This question has been posed many times, and I am not above this debate, having entertained this popular discourse before. Why must we have only one tool?

One explanation is derived from examining American culture, which has given rise to popular stories of singular tools helping the survivor navigate harsh terrain and overcome seemingly insurmountable odds.

While Rambo might have survived on the run with just a knife in *First Blood*, and Brian Robeson, the protagonist from the book, *Hatchet*, might have managed to live off the land with only his trusty tool, I'm sure both characters would have wanted more than one tool if given the option. In both stories, the characters were not given many choices of what they could carry because they were victims of circumstance.

Consider the load-out of Rogers' Rangers or those of the famous long hunters or the many indigenous American tribes. You'll find a knife and tomahawk carried as a set when these men could plan and prepare before heading out into the field.

Why limit your survivability with a single tool when you can have both? After all, there are times when the tomahawk will



“THE SLIGHTLY FORWARD REVERSE CURVATURE OF THE BLADE LENDS ITSELF TO SIMILARITIES TO FILIPINO BOLO KNIVES, AS WELL AS THE NEPALESE KUKRI.”



excel; at other times, a large camp knife will be the preferred tool. For the majority of the population, having both options is better than having only one.

If you're looking to mix and match, the endless number of large blades and the growing number of modern tomahawks offer hundreds of thousands of combinations. However, what is not often found is a bladesmith who can provide both a knife and tomahawk in a complementary set that works exceptionally well in their given roles.

Dave Wenger of Wenger Blades is one such maker who has created a set of tools that address the knife-and-tomahawk combination question: The Wenger Beohawk and Kuko Bush Knife are hand forged and have been designed as working tools.

KUKO BUSH KNIFE

The Kuko Bush Knife (MSRP: \$425) draws heavily from Pacific Island designs and features a 10-inch 80CRV2 blade ground to a full-convex edge. This knife weighs 16.2 ounces and measures 15.5 inches overall. The exposed steel of the knife is covered in Caswell matte finish that leaves a nonglare finish.

The slightly forward reverse curvature of the blade lends itself to similarities to Filipino bolo knives, as well as the

◀ The author was able to cut large, twisted strands of creeping bitter-sweet with a single slash of the Kuko Bush Knife.

Nepalese Kukri. This continuous curve along the edge ensures that the blade slices into the material being cut at an angle. By doing so, it increases the cutting efficiency of the blade over a straight edge.

The Kuko Bush Knife also has a primary full-height flat grind with a secondary Appleseed grind that does not bind in wood during chopping. The overall design is meant to excel as a camp knife and chopper—and it does.

After receiving my test sample, I immediately located some residual vines that grow



◀ During field testing, the author used the Kuko Bush Knife to split rounds of wood with and against the grain using nothing but the weight of the round and blade against an exposed root. The 80CRV2 steel handled the seasoned wood with ease.

in my neck of the woods. Grapevines and creeping bittersweet live throughout the winter and serve as an excellent test mediums. Because long blades, such as machetes and camp knives, work best with lightweight and thin vegetation, I wanted to see how well the Kuko Bush Knife fared.

I began by cutting through single vines effortlessly, followed by strands of vines that were bunched and twisted together into thick choking cords. The full-height grind of the Kuko Bush Knife won't bind in the material it's cutting. The balance is obviously forward of the handle and just behind the "sweet spot" of the belly to improve performance and reduce fatigue. For a knife this size, one would imagine the blade to be heavy, but it is surprisingly light and nimble in the hand. It handles more like a light machete than a heavy, sharpened pry bar similar to those some companies mass-produce.

Even though the combination of knife and tomahawk allows the survivor to use the tomahawk for heavier tasks, I wanted

to see what the Kuko could do when used on larger and more-seasoned wood. I was able to split rounds of wood along the length of the grain by pounding wood and blade against an exposed tree root. I downed thicker saplings with a single swipe of the blade and, with a heavy baton, I pounded through thick rounds of wood with no need for concern.

Dave Wenger has an extensive heat-treat process. It results in a long-lasting edge that

With the Kuko Bush Knife, batoning was a cinch, especially because of both the blade length and grind type.

Below: To test the cutting ability of the Kuko Bush Knife, the author used rolled straw mats in a controlled setting. This is a traditional sword-testing technique whose origins date back hundreds of years in Japan.



**"FOR A KNIFE THIS SIZE,
ONE WOULD IMAGINE THE
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IT IS SURPRISINGLY LIGHT
AND NIMBLE IN THE HAND."**

gets the most out of the 80CRV2 steel and remains noticeably sharp after extended use. Even after all I put it through its paces, this knife retained a decent field edge.

After beating on the knife and beating on my hands, I took to testing the fine work capability of the blade. The knife has a very long cutting edge, so the majority of the chopping duty is done at the "sweet spot"; and where the fine work is done is just forward of the finger choil.

The slight self-guard in the handle is rounded and provides no hot spots when choked up on. From the ricasso to the point, the spine is rounded, squared to a flat and then tapered to a point, preventing the spine from cutting into the hand where it shouldn't and being able to scrape a ferro rod where it should.

BEOHAWK TOMAHAWK

The Beohawk Tomahawk (MSRP: \$450) is designed for bushcraft from the ground up. Dave Wenger and Jason Gustafson of Lester River Bushcraft met at a trade show and discussed modifying the design of one of Wenger's earlier tomahawks to make the Beohawk more of a woods tool than the 'hawk's traditional role as a weapon. Gustafson has trained with some of the best in bushcraft and is highly proficient in his own right.

The Beohawk is the product of this collaboration. It blends real skills and experience from the field and the forge. It measures 14 inches from end to end and 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches from hammer poll to edge. The cutting edge measures 3 inches, and the tool's overall weight is 1 pound, 11 ounces.

The 'hawk's overall weight and shape are optimal for prolonged use. It fits in between the "too light to be useful" and "too heavy to be practical" categories in which the ideal tool is found.

Like the Kuko Bush Knife, the Beohawk is made from 80CRV2 steel and finished in a Caswell matte finish. It comes with a Kydex holster that bottom-ejects the hawk with a sharp tug on the handle. Secondary retention is provided by a knotted bungee cord that fits into a notch on the top of the carrier after wrapping under the head. A quick

CUTTING STRAW MATS

Straw mat-cutting, also known as *tameshegiri* or tatami cutting, is a traditional Japanese sword-testing technique that dates back hundreds of years. To the uninitiated, the practice simply looks like one is chopping away at a rolled-up straw mat. However, when you examine the angle and uniformity of the cut, the effectiveness of a blade is revealed.

For those interested in testing their blades in a similar way, the process is very simple. Traditional practitioners might object to the authenticity of these directions, but they are adapted to the modern world—with a nod of respect to the past.

Purchase several straw mats. These are sometimes sold as woven beach mats. Search big-box stores or on the Internet. They can be found very inexpensively. Another practice option is pool noodles.

Soak the mats in water for 12 to 24 hours. If possible, completely submerge the mats by weighing them down with a brick. This can be done in a bathtub or large barrel. Remove them from the water and let them dry for 20 minutes.

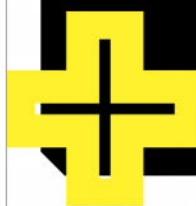
Roll mats tightly and tie them together in multiple sections. This will prevent them from unraveling as you cut them. Use lightweight, disposable cordage that can be cut easily.

Suspend the mats from a branch or insert a wooden dowel through the base and prop it up on a hay bale or stand. Make sure the area in which you are training is free of objects you don't want to hit by accident.

Exercise caution and good form. Take slow practice swings to build muscle memory, and have a good follow-through. Cutting can be done in many directions—angled downward, upward, horizontal, etc. Learn to use your entire body in the cutting motion.

Seek out further instruction and read about the techniques online. There are chopping cuts, draw cuts and a true technique to cutting efficiently.

Much can be learned from the past to improve your skills.



➤ The essence of true bushcraft is knowing your tools and environment well enough to get the ultimate versatility out of each tool in your kit.



➤ The Beohawk handle heel can be used as an emergency digging tool. Note: The author keeps the Beohawk's head covered to protect his hand from the edge.

tug on the handle, and the Beohawk is released from its cover. The hanging loops can be attached to a pack or worn on a belt, where the Beohawk can be worn in a variety of ways to keep it out of the way until it is needed.

I wanted to test the bow drill pivot in the Beohawk by using it to make a friction fire set. Using the hawk head, I cut a bough from a sapling with minimal flex. After 20 or 30 minutes, I finally found suitable wood for the friction and chopped it into size. One trick I discovered is that the bottom of the handle can be held in the crook behind the knee for additional



support while using the bearing block in the spindle hand.

Holding the round of wood in line with the 'hawk, it was split into a fireboard, and I cut a spindle from one of the round's halves. I carved it to shape and cut the notch out by holding the hawk just under the head. The lack of a rear spike made working with the Beohawk a breeze, with no worry of accidental cutting on the back of the wrist. The semicircle cut out on the beard of the blade helps put the user's hand more in line with the cutting edge. This puts less pressure on the wrist and makes carving much easier. Using only the materials prepared with the Beohawk, a skilled outdoorsman could build a lifesaving fire.

The weight of the Beohawk head allows the tool to dig deeply with each swing. The full, exposed tang ensures strength through the design, and the Micarta handle doesn't pose any risk of breaking—even with the hardest use. From a safe kneeling position, I used the tomahawk hard on seasoned wood. This tomahawk is meant for use, and I don't foresee any small-axe chopping task it won't be able to handle.

"...EVERY SO OFTEN, A PERFECT COMBINATION OF AESTHETIC GRACE AND WORKHORSE GRIT OCCURS."



◀ The Beohawk has a full, partially exposed tang with a paracord-wrapped handle that is meant for emergency cordage, as well as hand protection and comfort in cold weather. In the field, paracord is more easily replaced than handle scales.



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A graphic for a pharmaceutical company. It features three white bottles of erectile dysfunction medication: Cialis, Viagra (100 mg), and Levitra. To the right of the bottles is a color photograph of a World War II era soldier in a green uniform, helmet, and goggles, saluting. The background of the main text area is a textured, golden-yellow color.



➤ The author found that the bearing block pivot in the steel of the Beohawk head worked exceptionally well for friction fire-starting. The Beohawk's handle can be tucked behind the knee for added support and stability.



"THE WEIGHT OF THE BEOHAWK HEAD ALLOWS THE TOOL TO DIG DEEPLY WITH EACH SWING. THE FULL, EXPOSED TANG ENSURES STRENGTH THROUGH THE DESIGN, AND THE MICARTA HANDLE DOESN'T POSE ANY RISK OF BREAKING—EVEN WITH THE HARDEST USE."





◀ The Wenger Beohawk and Kuko Bush Tool comprise an excellent hawk and big-blade combination perfect for tackling any cutting task put in front of the survivor.

"CONSIDER THE LOAD-OUT OF ROGERS' RANGERS OR THOSE OF THE FAMOUS LONG HUNTERS OR THE MANY INDIGENOUS AMERICAN TRIBES. YOU'LL FIND A KNIFE AND TOMAHAWK CARRIED AS A SET..."

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For finer work and cold-weather use, Gustafson wanted the portion of the handle nearest the blade cord wrapped, because handling bare steel in the middle of the winter is uncomfortable. Also, the cordage can be replaced more easily than a wooden or Micarta scale if damaged.

A design feature Wenger incorporated into the shape of the handle is a "digging stick" tip. This feature lets foragers pry up roots and probe soil. With the head cover in place, this creates a safe and field-expedient digging tool. The hammer poll and the top of the head at the other end of the tomahawk are effective for pounding, as might be necessary to loosen fibers when making cordage from natural material. Again, the attention to detail confirms the intended bushcraft design.

FORM AND FUNCTION

Tools can be broken down into two categories: those appreciated for form and those appreciated for function. On one hand, there are knives and tools too nice to use for fear of losing collector's value with the slightest scratch. On the other end of the spectrum are the "beaters," which look better with use, and their character resonates in each spot of rust, ding and wear mark.

Nevertheless, every so often, a perfect combination of aesthetic grace and workhorse grit occurs. The combo set of Kuko Bush Knife and Beohawk offers tools that will be embraced by both worlds.

After handling this cutting combo, it is hard not to appreciate the workmanship Dave Wenger puts into his products; and upon using these in the field, one cannot help but be attracted to their performance.

Both tools are excellent in their own right and serve different purposes. They are far from boat anchors; they are well balanced and perfectly paired as a cutting tool duo.

Don't cut your chances by limiting yourself to one or the other ... get the pair and cover all your survival blade needs. **ASG**



SHATTERING THE DARKNESS



THE COAST HL8R HEADLAMP OFFERS BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE AND VERSATILITY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY GARRETT LUCAS

advantage of keeping both hands free to get my shelter up quickly and get inside.

Flash forward about a dozen years to 2016. Now, no matter where I am outdoors, whether it's camping in the summer or just taking a long day hike, I always have a headlamp with me ... just in case.

FROM ANEMIC TO BLINDING

It didn't take long for companies to quickly leapfrog incandescent lights with regard to power and output. In fact, I'm surprised at the rapid development of new LED lamps that can be driven to pump out previously unimaginable amounts of light from standard, compact batteries.

I've spent the last couple of weeks reviewing—and being impressed by—the new Coast HL8R headlamp. It is a prime example of a headlamp product that resides at the peak of LED lighting performance when it is balanced against available power sources.

On the high setting, the HL8R has an output of 800 lumens, with an approximate run time of four hours and 15 minutes. That's roughly 14 times the output of the several incandescent Maglites (which use four D batteries I've owned during the past 15 years—not to mention that the power source on the HL8R takes up much less space. That's not to knock a particular brand; I still love my Maglites for various reasons. However, it's just an example of how far lighting technology has come in such a short period of time, considering that incandescent flashlights were used for many decades with little improvement.

On the medium setting, the output for the HL8R is 245 lumens, and the output is 50 lumens on the low setting. Considering that you get a run time of approximately 62 hours on the low setting, 50 lumens is nothing to sneeze at. That's the amount of lumens produced by three, four-D-battery incandescent lights. That's more than enough light to walk the trail, work around camp and find your way home.

I remember when I got my first LED light for outdoors use. It was a whole new concept for lighting at the time, and I don't think most people understood the full potential of what was being developed; rather, it was a novelty.

The biggest benefit I got out of my first LED light was extended battery life. The handheld light had around eight LEDs, but the light was rather anemic and had a distinctive bluish tint. But I didn't really care about its weaknesses; I was just happy to be on the cutting edge of a new revolution in lighting. And what a revolution it turned out to be!

I am a true believer in headlamps. That's been the case since I had to set up a tent in the dark during a snowstorm on Mount Rogers back in 2004. Although the technology wasn't as good at the time, the LED light still provided me with the

"TECHNOLOGY HAS ALSO GIVEN US A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW USEFUL MODULARITY IS WHEN IT COMES TO A PIECE OF GEAR."

THE ADVANTAGE OF MODULARITY

Technology has also given us a better understanding of how useful modularity is when it comes to a piece of gear. That process allows the user to tailor the product for the specific use they have in mind without having to buy an additional or secondary product. The Coast HL8R

"THE COAST HL8R IS, BY FAR, THE MOST POWERFUL HEADLAMP I HAVE TRIED."

SPECIFICATIONS

Coast Portland HL8R Headlamp

- **POWER:** Includes a lithium rechargeable pack and alkaline battery pack (four double-A batteries)
- **LUMENS:** 800 (high); 245 (medium); 50 (low)
- **BEAM DISTANCE:** 702 feet/214 meters (high); 390 feet/119 meters (medium); 181 feet/55 meters (low)
- **RUN TIME:** Four hours, 15 minutes (high); 12 hours (medium); 62 hours (low)
- **FEATURES:** Twist focus and patented pure beam focusing; lifetime warranty against manufacturer's defects; weather- and water-resistant
- **MSRP:** \$179.99

headlamp exploits this concept by offering two separate battery packs that can be switched out and plugged into the lamp.

One pack is specifically for use with a rechargeable lithium battery; the other pack is designed to be used with four AA alkaline batteries. This versatility allows the user to choose between commonly found AA batteries or shed the extra batteries and depend on the rechargeable lithium battery pack. I believe firmly in the mantra, *Two is one, and one is none*. If I had this lamp in the field, I would keep both battery packs available. So, if you lack a viable charging source for one pack, you can use spare AA batteries instead.

In fact, this battery system works out incredibly well for me, because I have standardized all my electronic gear to work on just AA batteries. That way, there's only one type of extra batteries I need to carry. If absolutely necessary, I can use batteries from other portable electronics.

Another benefit is that I have a rollout solar charger that can juice up the top-tier rechargeable AA batteries I keep with me. In addition, the rechargeable lithium battery pack is recharged via a provided USB cord—which also works with my rollout solar charger. Win-win!

The art of modularity doesn't end with the power options of the HL8R; it also extends to the mode of carry of the battery packs. The battery packs can be worn on the back of the HL8R's horizontal headband.

I've grown accustomed to this kind of weight with my other headlamps. However,

- Also included with the kit is a rechargeable lithium-ion pack. The two battery packs can be swapped out easily by simply unplugging the cord from the headgear and plugging it into the other pack.

PLAYING IN THE DARK

Headlamps are handy around the house, garage or even in the car when you're moving things around—including yourself—in the dark. Unless the power's out, the main place I use headlamps is when I'm moving in the woods at night or around a campsite. As a result, it was only natural to want to test the HL8R in that kind of environment to gauge the kind of



➤ The rechargeable lithium-ion battery is refreshed via the micro-USB port located under the grey rubber cover. The kit also includes a wall-wart plug that will allow you to charge the battery pack from a computer, solar charger or a standard power outlet.



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"HEADLAMPS ARE HANDY AROUND THE HOUSE, GARAGE OR EVEN IN THE CAR WHEN YOU'RE MOVING THINGS AROUND—INCLUDING YOURSELF—IN THE DARK."

performance I could expect from it during regular use.

Waiting until it was pitch-black out, with no moon for assistance, I headed out to the woods on our family's land and did the kinds of normal activities I would normally do at night and around camp. Of course, the first thing I wanted to do was test out the HL8R on the highest power setting while the battery pack was still fresh.

Let's just say that I was impressed with the output of this little lamp. With the wide-open flood setting, the headlamp lit up several hundred square feet and was more than enough light for other people

to work by if setting up tents or carrying gear into camp—although the high setting does diminish the run time by a good amount. After panning the lamp around for a while, I dialed the light into the full spotlight mode, which dramatically increased the distance the HL8R lit up the surroundings.

The farthest tree I could see with good detail in the spotlight mode was approximately 350 feet away and, at that point, the growth is so cluttered that other trees start blocking out the view. What I found really satisfying was the 50-lumen output of the low setting. With the focus wide open, it was more than enough light for walking and taking in the surroundings.

With the focus of the beam twisted down to the spotlight setting, those 50 lumens provided ample, clean light for the user's personal area when doing chores at night, whether it's going through gear or cooking a meal. This is very important to me, because I keep my headlamps on the low setting to maximize battery life. Very rarely do I need to spotlight something hundreds of feet away. Nevertheless, it's nice to have that option, just in case.

The Coast HL8R is, by far, the most powerful headlamp I have tried. Even better, the operation is simple and very intuitive. There were no secret codes to remember to access different lighting modes—just turn it on, dial in the power level, and focus the light. The different battery packs are quite useful, especially for preppers looking for versatility in their tools.

All the HL8R features, along with Coast's lifetime warranty, create an excellent package for those looking for this type of lighting option. This lamp should definitely be on your list for consideration. In fact, once you try the Coast HL8R, it will take no time to sell itself! **ASG**

SOURCE

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Keeping both battery packs on hand during your outing provides several options for power, including charging from a solar wrap, using AA batteries or recharging the light from a USB port found in computers and many newer-model cars.



Twisting the HL8R's bezel focuses the light into an intense spotlight that extends the reach of the light a substantial distance beyond the normal flood setting.



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LIT SURVIVAL

REVIEW BY JD HUGHES

THE EVERYTHING GUIDE TO LIVING OFF THE GRID

BY TERRI REID

The greatest takeaway from *The Everything Guide to Living off the Grid* is how many times you will ask yourself, "Why didn't I think of that?" Like any good teacher, this book asks you to think and to question your assumptions.

You've made up your mind. You're tired of the rat race, tired of high crime rates, tired of the local politics. It's time to move off the grid. But where do you start? Sign up for classes on raising chickens? Go to the library and start researching solar power?

That's where *The Everything Guide to Living Off the Grid* comes in. If your local community college offered a course in sustainable homesteading, this would be the required textbook.

Most new businesses fail within the first two years. Whether this failure is due to insufficient capitalization, poor choice of location or any number of other reasons, the end result is still the same. There is a saying in the military that "failing to plan is planning to fail." This is also the reason most who attempt to make the transition to living off the grid give up. This book is an excellent tool for helping you develop your plan.

Author Terri Reid has spent the last 20 years living the life many preppers yearn for. Reid and her family left Chicago for a small rural community and 100-year-old farm house. It is the lessons she has learned over this period of time that she shares in the book. She presents you with the questions you need to have answered in order to properly plan your transition.

Each chapter features highlighted sections with important information. "eQuestion" helps with answers to the most frequently asked questions for the topic under discussion. "eFact" provides especially important information, and "eAlert" covers urgent warnings, such as the congressional testimony regarding the vulnerability of our electrical grid. Finally, "eEssentials" are handy tips to make planning easier—for example, a formula for estimating the power usage of an appliance.

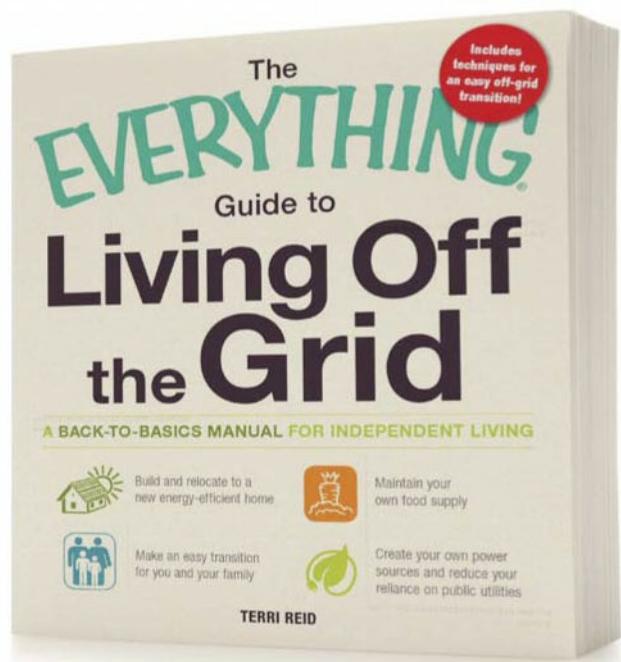
The first chapter is a reality check: Why do you want to live off the grid? What are your needs vs. your wants? Do you have, or are you planning to have, children, and if so, what will their future needs be? How far off the grid can you realistically go?

Chapters two and three cover finances, getting out of debt before you go and generating income after you get there. After that, Reid gets a little more specific.

But this isn't a DIY instruction book. There are sections covering a broad range of topics—from beekeeping and canning to raising rabbits and managing an independent water supply.

The final chapter, "Starting Today," might be the most important. It covers ways in which you can give an off-the-grid lifestyle a trial run.

After all, it might be years before you are finally prepared to move to



that mountain cabin, but you can start growing your own food, using alternative transportation and even finding ways to reduce your dependency on modern conveniences, no matter where you live.

What the author has really done is provide you with food for thought. In the end, this book is the perfect way to start making your dream of a self-sufficient lifestyle a reality ... or it might help you realize that reality might be nothing like what you imagined. **ASG**

WHERE TO BUY IT

- ***THE EVERYTHING GUIDE TO LIVING OFF THE GRID***
BY TERRI REID
- **\$15.95 (PAPERBACK)**
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LAST WORDS

A DANGEROUS COMBINATION

There's a disturbing trend occurring that I don't think most people know about, and if they truly understood the consequences, there'd be 30 million Americans marching to our nation's capital.

Over the past year, the global economic system seems to have been barely staying afloat, and the longer time goes on, the more often it sinks beneath the surface for just a bit. Sometime soon, we're going to see its last gasp of air.

To stave off this inevitable collapse of the current Ponzi scheme, countries around the world have been manipulating their financial markets and taking unprecedented steps in experimenting with negative interest rates.

In the old days, when you put your money in the bank, the bank paid you interest on your money because you trusted it enough to store your wealth there. Negative interest rates are just the opposite: Now, the banks are charging their customers a fee just to be able to see a teller, and they are wanting to charge customers a percentage of what's in their banking account.

They're already doing it in a few countries. It's already made news that the Federal Reserve (for the United States) has already been contemplating instituting a negative interest rate. That doesn't seem like too much of an issue, right? Keep enough in the bank to pay the bills, and stash the extra cash someplace else.

But here's the rub: During the last 12 months, there's been a big push to switch from paper currency to a digital currency. That way, the banks and the government can track your every movement, observe every transaction and tax every single "dime" you spend.

Think that's an exaggeration? France already bans transactions that exceed 1,000 euros, and just recently, three separate papers have been released that propose the eradication of the \$100 bill here, in the United States. It's the first step to taking cash out of the currency system and moving everyone to a digital system.

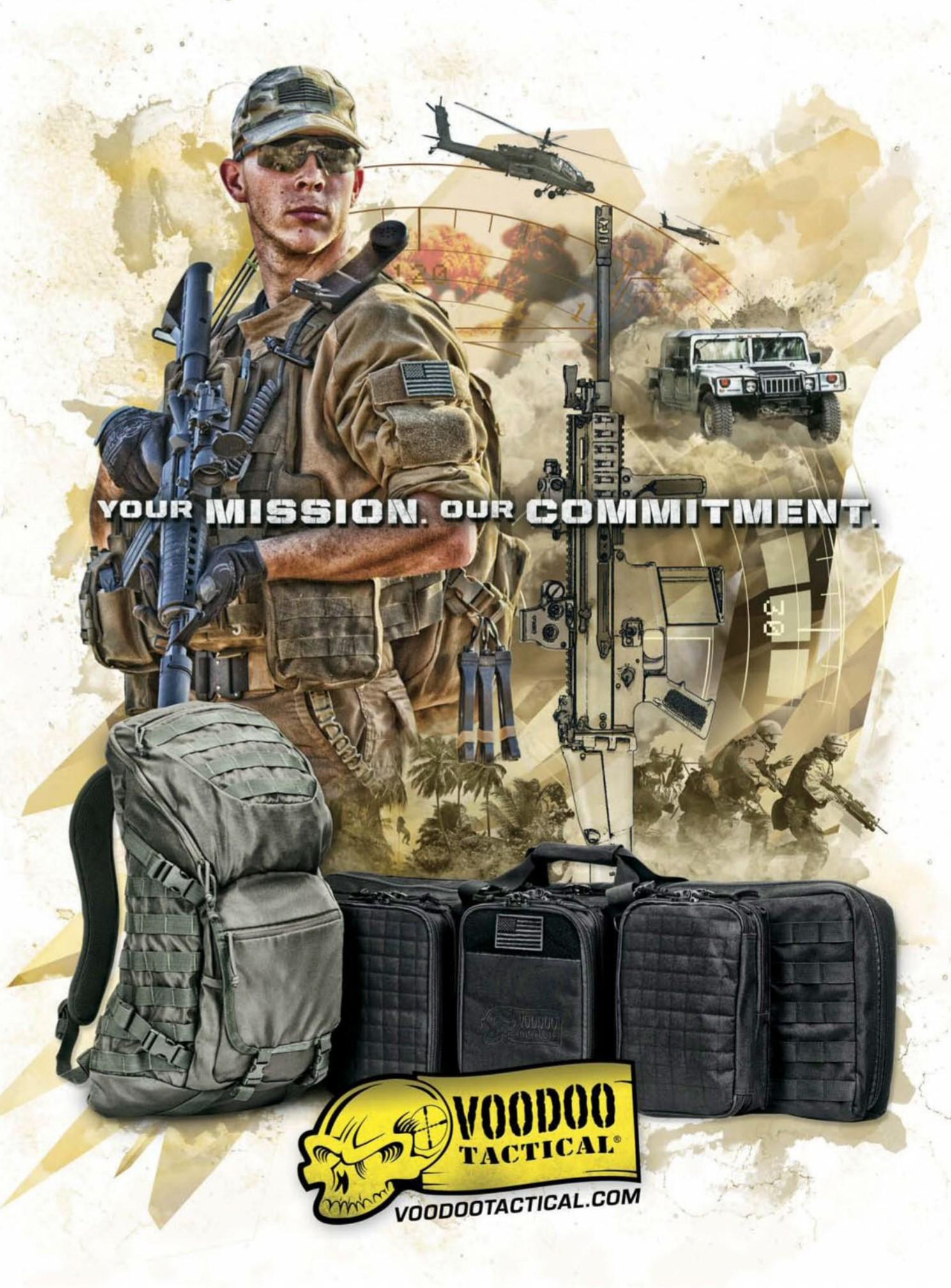
Hey, wait a minute! What about those negative interest rates? That's right. Once everyone is moved to a digital currency system, there will be no cash to keep outside the bank. Therefore, you will have no choice but to pay the negative interest rates, because you will be forced to use a bank that will keep a record of your digital money. In essence, you'll be paying for a bank to store nothing but a few lines of information, and you'll have no choice in the matter. Pretty convenient for them, huh?

Instead of just printing more paper that devalues the dollar, the Federal Reserve could just add a couple of zeroes to the nation's monetary supply and devalue each unit of currency even more—and do it much more quickly. Sheesh, the printing presses must be taking too long to spit out dollars that weren't a result of actual production or economic growth.

What's the answer? I'm not sure, especially when it comes to someone else's financial situation. I stock some precious metals, but possession of gold could be outlawed again, just as in 1933, when President Roosevelt recalled gold with executive orders. Even though you stock up on supplies, maybe stocking up even more would put your money to good use. That's one thing I'm thinking about.

Most importantly, though, is to pay attention to business news and anything that has to do with our nation's currency. Maybe we'll get some clues ahead of time and know which moves to make with our wealth so that we get maximum benefit out of it. That way, it won't be locked in a bank's computer to be assessed fees and then appropriated by federal officials for a massive bailout attempt when the house of cards finally begins to collapse. **ASG**





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